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National Defences

THE ENGLISH CITIZEN:

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15.

NATIONAL DEFENCES

BY
John Frederick
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NATIONAL DEFENCES

INTRODUCTION

It is nearly fourteen years since Mr. Craik first proposed to me that I should write this little book. The change which has come over the mind of Britain during that time in relation to the questions of which it treats is a very remarkable one. In 1883 "National Defence" was assumed by the great majority of our people to mean the defence of these islands by Army, Volunteers, and Militia. The war of 1870 had left so deep an impress on the minds of patriotic British men that the one anxious thought that prevailed was, "How can we save Britain from the fate of France?" It had been by the superiority of the German army and organisation that France had been crushed. The direct inference was that we must improve our land forces in such a way as to make the troops that could be raised for home defence strong enough to resist invasion. We had only just emerged from the dominance of a school of which the motto was, "Confederate the Colonies, and let them go." Apart from a few merely reckless talkers like Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who had paid no attention whatever to the

changes which had taken place in the armed condition of the Continent, and glibly chattered about our being able to invade France, the mass of thoughtful men felt cowed by the stupendous magnitude of the armies arrayed by the Continental powers, and thinking only of the safety of their homes, had quite abandoned the idea that Britain, which had in the great war stood alone against the master of Europe, could still be reckoned as a great power. To me the whole range of these conceptions seemed false. When Mr. Craik first spoke to me I answered at once, "'National Defence,' that is a subject which you ought to assign to a sailor!" A little reflection, however, showed me that if I as a soldier could show on military grounds that the whole question must be discussed from the point of view of Britain as a great naval power, and that the type of army we want must be determined by the consideration that we are an island state spreading her dominion over all seas and into vast lands beyond them, it might be more effective than if the same thesis were put forward by a sailor, who might easily be supposed to be influenced by the notion that "there is nothing like leather." No sailor had in fact taken up the question, in such a fashion at all events as to reach the general public. The few statesmen we had who concerned themselves with such matters were devoting themselves to considering how we could imitate Switzerland, so as to become a sweet little passive state—"the world forgetting, by the world forgot." Whilst, therefore, this book was intended by its designers only to be a bit of easy writing, telling a simple story about facts most familiar to me, it was in truth, as it presented itself to me, a proposal that

I should change the whole mind of Britain, and I saw that it would be impossible to attempt that task in the few pages of a little manual. I therefore delayed, and, watching my opportunity, I a few years later endeavoured to show,[1] from the actual relations to one another of the armed forces of the Continent, which it had been my duty as a soldier to study, how enormous was the influence which a great naval power was able to exert on the millions of armed men who seemed so appalling. That the truth of my argument was more likely, if it were a good one, to be appreciated on the Continent, and among Englishmen there resident, than it would be at home was obvious. The little volume *The Balance of Military Power in Europe* had at least the honour done it that it was one of only, I think, six volumes other than novels, two among the six being Mr. Gladstone's, which the great Tauchnitz firm have thought fit to reproduce in their editions. I had, however, limited myself to the statement in regard to the Navy, that we could do such and such things which would make us felt as a power to be courted *if* our Navy was as strong as it ought to be. I asked the sailors to say whether it was so or not. I had used these expressions, "I am pleading before all things for the Navy" (p. xxix). To those who proposed to give a vast numerical expansion to our land forces, I answered, "The faithful son must say to his country what the little frog of Æsop's fable said to his mother, attempting to blow herself out to the size of the ox, 'You will burst before you succeed.' We can be relatively to other countries as great a naval

[1] In *The Balance of Military Power in Europe*, Blackwood, 1888. All the articles appeared in 1887.

power as we choose to be" (p. 216). Speaking of our offensive strength, "It depends first on our Navy; and secondly, upon our being able to prepare for instant action as large a force as we can promptly ship from our ports." As no sailor had then spoken out as to the needs of the Navy, "whether our Navy can" do all the business that we ought to expect from it "we do not know." "Till it can accomplish them with certainty we cry, with General Ricci, 'All for the Navy and nothing for the Army'" (p. 205).

So peculiar and exceptional did my position appear at the time that Sir Charles Dilke, whose articles in the *Fortnightly*, advocating for us a Swiss army, had been the text for my replies, originally published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, thought that he damaged me by saying of me, "Colonel Maurice, though a soldier, belongs to the Naval School." But as time went on, the wind of popular favour went clean round. In January 1888 Lord Charles Beresford resigned his seat on the Admiralty Board nominally on account of a question of salaries for the new Intelligence Department, really, as he explained to his constituents on 26th January 1888, because of the chaos which he found and the want of preparation for war, for which he could then obtain no adequate remedy. The next potent influence which changed the views of men was that historic scene on 14th May 1888 when, in the House of Lords, before a great gathering of members of both Houses, the Commons crowding the bar, the whole country in expectation as to what he was going to say, Lord Wolseley declared that "*As long as the Navy is as weak as it is at this moment*, Her Majesty's army cannot hold its

own all over the world, dispersed as it is; that our defences at home and abroad at this present moment are in an unsatisfactory condition, and that our military forces are not organised or equipped as they should be, to guarantee even the safety of the capital in which we are at this present moment. . . . The views which I have expressed here this evening are those entertained by nine out of every ten soldiers and sailors whose opinions are worth having."

On the same day was held the preliminary meeting of sailors which ultimately led up to the great meeting in the City, at which a paper by Sir G. Hornby was read before the Chamber of Commerce on 28th May on the needs of the navy. Mr. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette* had been doing yeoman service in the cause, but it is a significant fact that when Lord Charles Beresford's committee first applied to the Lord Mayor for the use of the Guildhall it was by him refused.

In June 1888 the editor of the *Fortnightly*, who had been entirely convinced by my *Blackwood* articles that the principle of our national defence must be based on naval force and on an army adapted to the conditions of an island state, invited me to write an anonymous article on the necessity of looking to our Navy for Imperial defence, and on the enormous task which, relatively to others, it had to undertake. He followed it up in July by an editorial article on "Our True Foreign Policy," which entirely adopted the lines I had sketched. In September of that year (1888) it was still so difficult to get the sailors to speak out as to their needs that I, having been with Sir George Tryon's fleet, contributed to the *Fortnightly* an article on "The

Naval Manœuvres" anonymously in order to draw out the lessons which I had learnt from Sir George Tryon, and from much conversation with many sailors as to the necessity for a larger fleet than was required in former days if we were to hold our own. Not till the November of that year was the editor of the *Fortnightly* able to procure from our most distinguished sailors, Sir Geoffrey Hornby, Lord Alcester, and others, a series of signed articles on "What our Navy should be." These, with the vigorous work of Lord Charles Beresford in the House of Commons, at last brought on the "Naval Defence Act," which was well described at the time as "a triumph of the experts," that is to say, not a triumph of the demands of the sailors alone, but of the appeal of the Army responded to by the Navy. The nation had not yet been aroused. Then came those great volumes of Captain Mahan on *The Influence of the Sea-Power in History*, which took the whole question out of the hands of "the experts," and by their charm, their literary power, and their vigorous setting forth of the truth as to the part which Britain had played in the great war, awoke her to know herself, and unquestionably brought home to the Continent also the nature of Britain's power. By one of those strange revulsions of feeling which Mr. Kinglake has so graphically described in his earlier volumes, the nation, which had forgotten that on the sea depended her life, that the charter of her freedom was that Britannia must rule the waves or perish, suddenly came into a full recognition of those facts. Immediately those who had sailed with her former humour trimmed their sails for the new breeze. To my no small amusement more

than one of those who had fought me most fiercely as a member of that despised and despicable school, which looked to the sea as the determining factor in the problem of National Defence, became known as specially *the* naval advocates. Some who had taken no part in the earlier discussion devoted themselves to naval questions, and directly perverting language which I had used, amused themselves by imaginative sketches of future war, in which England was left without those allies to whom I had ventured to say that we had much to offer if we were ready to give help in order to get help. My purpose had been simply to answer the averment that no one cared for the support of that state, the might of which, as the great sea power, has at last been taught them by an American. Others, like Mr. Thursfield,[1] who have done excellent service in bringing home the need of a powerful navy, find it impossible to do justice to that side of the question without altogether ignoring the necessity for an army, treating the right arm and left arm of England as if they were not both needed for the active and passive defence of the nation in hearty co-operation, but were antagonistic one to the other. Therefore, like Lord Charles Beresford, I find that, as the wind has shifted, I must, in order to hold on to the course on which fourteen years ago I started, tack to allow for the shifted wind. I still believe that what we need is "a supreme Navy, an adequate Army, and," using the words in the large and inclusive sense in which Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff first coined the happy phrase, "an incomparable diplomacy," in order to obtain the full advantage

[1] *The Navy and the Nation.*

from this our proper strength. But whereas fourteen years ago every one except soldiers seemed to have forgotten that for us everything depended on the sea dominion and our relation thereto, now the danger is lest it should be forgotten that to give freedom and power to the Navy, and to use it when it is free, the Army must be adequate to maintain on land those gifts which we owe to the power on the sea. There are writers who would ignore those advantages which we possess in the footholds for naval or conjoint action which are in our hands in the best harbours and coaling-stations the world over. I have somewhat more than kept to the Horatian rule in the matter of the time during which this work has been under my hand. Short as it is, it represents some fourteen years or more of thought even since it was undertaken. Yet I must admit that it assumes a somewhat different form from what it would have done had it been finished in the year in which it was begun. I do not know that I have much need to enter into a description of its contents—the chapter headings speak for themselves. My object in this Introduction has been chiefly to put in a plea for the patriotism of the Army. I can honestly say that when I was accused of belonging to the "Naval School" I simply represented what was then the dominant—in fact, the universal—feeling of the Army, which was conscious, though the country was not, that it was useless to England if her Navy was not supreme. Under the circumstances which I have quoted, the dates of which speak for themselves, and can be easily verified, I think we may be spared some of those sneers which the perfervid zeal of those who are now rejoicing in a

condition of the public mind which we for long struggled with difficulty to bring about, find necessary in order to emphasise their adherence to the now popular creed. Neither the adequate Army, adequate fixed defences to enable small numbers to do the work of many, nor an "incomparable diplomacy," taking note of the actual condition under which navy, army, and mercantile marine have to be used to give full effect to the strength of Britain, can be spared or ignored, because, thank Heaven! we have at last secured and are bound to maintain our supreme Navy.

which many of us ardently desire, has come to be spoken of as "Imperial Federation." I think, however, that every one feels that the name is little better than a make-shift. Our "Empire," however it be formed, is about as unlike anything that ever bore that name before as two aggregations of men can well be. I am not now thinking only and merely of its vast extent, of the enormous numbers of human beings that are included in it, nor even of its extraordinary dispersion and of the vast varieties among the races which compose it. I can perhaps best illustrate the particular point I want to make by suggesting the question whether the territories of the East Africa Company and of the North Borneo Company are, or are not, included in the "Empire." I suppose most people would in some sort of way say "yes" with qualifications. Clearly, at all events, India is most emphatically included in the "Empire." Yet India was, less than a hundred years ago, a dependency with relations to the Empire very similar to those of Borneo and East Africa to-day. Sir John Seeley has no doubt shown conclusively, what had long previously been asserted by foreign writers, that the British Empire did, like other empires, grow very largely by war and conquest. But, if it was like other empires in that it owed much of its growth to war, certainly the proportion in which trade, commerce, and emigration have contributed to its growth is out of all comparison with their influence in any other history whatever. Moreover, though the soil was gained and the seeds of future development were certainly planted for the most part during war, or at least because we were absolutely dominant on the seas, yet the growth of

CHAPTER I

GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE CASE

THE question of "National Defence" divides itself naturally under the heads—What have we to defend? Against what have we to defend it? With what means shall we defend it?

I suppose that the very title "National Defence" implies that that which we have to defend is—the nation. But it would be very difficult to find a corner of the globe in which the interests of some part of the nation, English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish, are not involved. In considering the question of National Defence, it is not possible to ignore this extreme dispersion of our vast interests over the globe. If we compare our position with that of any other people, the contrast which is presented by their circumstances and ours is the more striking the more carefully one considers it. Let me take one very important point, on which in this chapter I am specially anxious to insist, as to the nature of our quite exceptional conditions.

People have taken lately to talking much more than formerly of the "Empire." For want of a better name that closer union with our cousins beyond the seas,

which many of us ardently desire, has come to be spoken of as "Imperial Federation." I think, however, that every one feels that the name is little better than a make-shift. Our "Empire," however it be formed, is about as unlike anything that ever bore that name before as two aggregations of men can well be. I am not now thinking only and merely of its vast extent, of the enormous numbers of human beings that are included in it, nor even of its extraordinary dispersion and of the vast varieties among the races which compose it. I can perhaps best illustrate the particular point I want to make by suggesting the question whether the territories of the East Africa Company and of the North Borneo Company are, or are not, included in the "Empire." I suppose most people would in some sort of way say "yes" with qualifications. Clearly, at all events, India is most emphatically included in the "Empire." Yet India was, less than a hundred years ago, a dependency with relations to the Empire very similar to those of Borneo and East Africa to-day. Sir John Seeley has no doubt shown conclusively, what had long previously been asserted by foreign writers, that the British Empire did, like other empires, grow very largely by war and conquest. But, if it was like other empires in that it owed much of its growth to war, certainly the proportion in which trade, commerce, and emigration have contributed to its growth is out of all comparison with their influence in any other history whatever. Moreover, though the soil was gained and the seeds of future development were certainly planted for the most part during war, or at least because we were absolutely dominant on the seas, yet the growth of

wealth and population in those parts of the world in which Europeans can thrive and work, has taken place during peace time. Few things are more remarkable in our history than the change in our position relatively to other powers during the time that has elapsed since we lost the American colonies. Yet that change, vast as it is, has been due far more to the natural increase of a population with a practically boundless area into which to expand, and to the development of material wealth within the Empire, than even to the immense territories which have accrued to us by conquest.

The very name of Empire, derived, I suppose, originally from the Imperator of the Roman armies, implies something other than this. Nor am I aware of an instance in which the idea of "Empire" has not been connected with circumstances under which the preservation of the state was so difficult that the man who ruled the armies which were engaged in its preservation and extension had become its inevitable ruler. That is surely the idea of the empires of Cæsar and his successors, of Napoleon, of the Tzars, of old and new Germany, and of Austria. In considering the question of the national defence of this realm, it is not in one way only but in many that this difference between our Empire and all other empires that have ever been has to be taken into account. Mommsen, as the result of a vast survey of the history of the world, tells us that history knows no record of the preservation of dominion without military strength. But it is not in military strength alone that our dominion differs from all others.

The title of this whole series of books represents an appeal to all those who are now responsible for the

government of this great dominion, to make themselves acquainted with the conditions under which their rule has to be exercised. The mere attempt, important as it is, to bring simple facts before even the select and limited body of electors who alone are at all likely to study this series, shows how complex and how difficult is the execution of the work of safeguarding the vast interests which are in our keeping. It is said with truth that, no matter how powerful a ministry may be, it cannot initiate a great policy for which Public Opinion is not prepared. Yet Public Opinion habitually awaits the leadership of the very men who are afraid to speak out lest they should find that Public Opinion is against them. A great empire which is thus for ever, like the army led by Sir Richard Strachan and Lord Chatham, kept back from definite action because there is no one who both can and will guide its course, stands at serious initial disadvantage as compared with "empires" of another pattern. Surely it is therefore all-important that those in whose hands all power ultimately lies should realise that power and responsibility cannot be divorced. Can there be any doubt that the electorate, which has claimed to become the ultimate ruler of the Empire, will simply ruin it and will make itself and all free institutions the laughing-stock of history, if it does not face the responsibility which it has thus assumed? Moreover, there are three things, not two, which, by the inexorable laws of the universe, are inevitably linked where a healthy and safe condition of things is to exist. Those three are—power, responsibility, and knowledge. It is therefore with an earnest appeal to any one who honours me by reading this volume, to realise how stern is the duty

which now lies before all intelligent men of Britain to understand the conditions of National Defence and to impart them to others, that I begin my task. I do not ask them to trust me. I ask them, on the contrary, to sift every word that I say to the utmost, and to reject everything which is not true and sound, so far as by careful examination they can determine what is sound and what is not sound. But I implore them not to go, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, another to his medical practice, another to his preaching, another to his pleading in the courts, thinking that it does not matter to any one but himself whether he understands these matters aright or does not understand them at all. In private almost every day of my life I meet with this experience. I am talking to some excellent parson, some able lawyer, some wealthy merchant. He indicates that feeling of the apartness of all that has to do with soldiers which is characteristic of the average British man. It is not his business to know anything about it. He lets you feel that at bottom he wonders how a man of average intelligence, as in his courtesy he assumes that you are, can find interest in such affairs of "guns and drums," as Lowell has it. Then a few minutes afterwards he expresses some very definite opinion indeed as to the present condition of affairs. It is an opinion which will largely help, within his own sphere of influence, to form that great deity whom we worship—"Public Opinion." Yet he has, as you sorrowfully note, formed it without the smallest study of the facts on which a sound conclusion could be based. The question on which he pronounces judgment has been perhaps recently and largely discussed. Different views have

been expressed by different writers. But from this conflict of opinions this much at least of light has shone. Mere errors and misstatements of fact have been completely exposed and refuted. Some facts have come out so clearly and certainly that the man who disputes them stands in the same position of moral and intellectual weakness as he who should assert in the present year that the world is flat or that it never moves. Yet your dogmatic friend cares for none of these things, and is hopelessly kicking against the pricks. I am silenced because I feel that the line which divides me from the man with whom I am talking is one of elementary morality. He has shown me that, from the heights of his lofty belief in the duty of men to buy and sell and get gain, he looks down upon any pursuit which is not concerned with those matters. He has shown me also that he has no sense whatever of the responsibility he incurs in assisting to determine the future of hundreds of millions of men; that if all the rulers of Britain require as much education as he does, and are as ignorant of their own want of it, her fate is certain.

Nothing is more extraordinary than the way in which in Britain men will treat British Ministers and a British Government as though they could and would act for them in the sense in which Bismarck, for instance, acted for Germany. To take an historical instance, now some years old, to which I shall perhaps have to refer again in another connection.

Every year during many years this scene repeated itself in the Edinburgh Town Council. A certain Bailie drew attention to the absolutely defenceless condition of the harbour of Leith, of Edinburgh, and of the Clyde.

Of that absolute defencelessness, as a fact, no one who had in the slightest degree looked into the matter could then have the shadow of a doubt. No one in the Town Council of Edinburgh even attempted to discuss the question on its merits. The worthy Bailies pursued a different course. They all agreed to laugh at the one man who raised the question. He did not usually even find one Councillor to second his motion. Now it may be quite right and quite wise in such times as we are in for the Forth Bridge and the harbour of Leith and Edinburgh to run the chance of our never being at war again. It may be true economy to save the money that would be required to make these places secure against such an inroad as was easily directed against them during recent naval manœuvres. But what cannot be right is that these worthy Bailies should vote year after year on an absolutely false assumption as to the reliance they can place on the Government's helping them if they do not help themselves. It is quite certain that they were during all those years voting on a false assumption. During the first session of Parliament in 1888, the Government, by the mouths of the Secretaries of State for War and of the First Lord of the Admiralty, expressly declared that they could not undertake the defence of the great commercial ports as a matter of Imperial concern, that the governing bodies of those ports must deal with the question themselves. That had been the view held, not by one Government in particular, but by all Governments in those years. Yet it had not till 1888 ever been publicly announced. Year after year the report of the "contemptuous laughter" with which the annual motion was received

in the Edinburgh Town Council went the round of the Edinburgh press. The avowed reason of this attitude of mind of the majority of the Edinburgh Bailies was that it was "the business of the Government to look after that matter." Was there not a battery of artillery at Leith Fort, a battalion of infantry in Edinburgh Castle, and a regiment of cavalry duly quartered in Edinburgh? Nay, were there not some guns mounted on Inchkeith? Did not this show that the Government undertook the defence of the place? And all the time the Government had not the slightest idea of undertaking anything of the kind. Having, moreover, able military advisers, which the Town Council had not, and had no idea of attempting to have, the Government had for years been aware that defence of Edinburgh or the Clyde there was none. As soon, however, as the ports became fully aware of the truth, the powerful deputation which waited on the then Prime Minister showed how great had been the misunderstanding. The decision of the Government was at once changed.

Naturally, in dealing with national defence, it is not for the sake of Edinburgh alone that I insist on these facts of recent history. Nor is it even for the sake of saying to every one of our other great commercial ports and harbours, "Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur," as one well might do, or, as Nathan put it to David, "It is of thee that the story is true." The inference is far wider and larger. As it has been with the great commercial ports and harbours, so has it been with the even more important question of our coaling-stations and our great military fortresses. Not one stone would have been laid for the protection of those stations on which the efficiency

of our Navy depends in many distant parts of the world, not one gun would have been mounted, if it had not been for pressure brought to bear upon the Government from outside. I am not speaking of the present Government. I am speaking of the efforts made to draw attention to this vital question for twenty years past by men who were snubbed almost as thoroughly as our friend the Bailie has ever been, though there was and could be no question of their knowledge, their ability, or the soundness of their views.

What I want to insist on is that, as the first great primal factor in dealing with this question of National Defence, we must face the fact that the talk about "Ministerial Responsibility"—in so far as that is to be understood to mean that members of a British Cabinet or the Cabinet as a whole will undertake or dream of undertaking what they know to be necessary for the defence of the Empire, except in so far as the public at large has been roused to realise what that is—is sheer unmitigated gaseous froth—mere noise portending nothing. A British Cabinet cannot, by the very nature of our party system, do this or anything like this.

It is easy and worth while to show in some minor details how our system in this respect works.

Twenty years ago there were certain huts on Woolwich Common which were used for the married non-commissioned officers and men of the garrison. They had, from bad drainage and the gradual wear and tear of time, become unfit for human habitation. They were hotbeds of disease. An epidemic, due solely to the defective condition of the quarters, was literally sweeping off the children. The general commanding at Woolwich at the

time was a strong man. He pointed out in report after report the condition of things and their cause. Steadily and persistently he was snubbed. The permanent officials at the Treasury either directly or indirectly had so cut down the estimate for barracks and huts that the only mode of meeting the case was to let the children die and bully the general. But the general was not a man easily bullied. He knew his duty and he stuck to his point. In the teeth of express orders to discontinue the correspondence, addressed to him by those who represented not real military authority but political convenience, he returned again and again to the charge; and, in direct disobedience of the disgraceful orders he had received, one of his last letters expressed the hope that he would yet see the last stone of those huts removed. Suddenly the whole scene changed. By some means or other, how it was never known, certainly not by the general's action, a hint was given to the *Daily News*. That paper sent down a correspondent, who furnished a full report of the facts. *The following day* several of the highest authorities at the Horse Guards were sent down to clear every soul out of the huts, and find accommodation for them elsewhere.

Now observe, in this instance at all events, not one new fact had been brought to the knowledge of the Government then in power by the newspaper report. Every fact had been duly recorded in official documents and in the strongest language by the man whose duty it was to draw attention to them. The mere facts produced no effect whatever. The only thing that produced any effect was the fear of the results of the publicity of such a scandal upon voting in the House of Commons. To

complete the story, when the newspapers commented on the scandal, censure was passed upon the gross dereliction of duty in the general, who had not drawn attention to such a state of things.

Now what is the bearing of that story upon this great question of National Defence? Simply this. That what here happened in a matter of pure right and wrong, of the ordinary care of lives for which the Secretary of State for War was "responsible," happens daily under our system, no matter which party may be in power, in relation to the great questions of National Defence. A Government may and does know that in certain respects danger threatens the Empire as surely as the lives of the children at Woolwich were threatened. But it cannot and will not act because of our party system, until the public at large, the body of the voting electorate, realises what the danger is. To save the lives of the children meant spending money. Spending money may at any time be turned into a charge of reckless extravagance by party agency. It will so be turned unless public attention has so been directed to the matter that it is more dangerous to run the risk of offending against its instinct than to spend the money. But that is not the only part of the story that is in point. The directly false charge against the general was allowed to pass unchallenged in the House of Commons. It was not because no one within its walls knew the truth that it so escaped challenge. The facts accidentally became known to me; and, in those days of my hot youth, I imagined that any British gentleman who was a member of the House would have looked upon it as one of the first duties of such an assembly to allow the Secretary of State for

War publicly to acknowledge that the accused man had done his duty. I wrote the whole of the facts in a letter to one of the most honourable men I knew, who was at the time a member of the House. I pledged myself to substantiate them. I never received an answer to that letter, and the Secretary of State for the time being —who he was I am glad to say that I do not now remember, and I do not care—allowed the scandalous lie to go out to the world. The general was never employed again. He is still alive, and every fact I have stated can be established to the hilt by those who are yet alive. I never spoke to that general in my life, and have no other regard for him whatever than for one who did his duty and was foully wronged. What I do care to draw attention to is the effect of such a system on all questions of National Defence. By such a method, by ignoring the reports of those whose duty it is to draw attention to defects and weakness, by cringing before a popular cry when you will not do your duty when you have not that fear before your eyes, by snubbing men who tell you the truth and leaving them afterwards unemployed, by allowing lies to go forth against them—in plain English, by ceasing when you are in office to consider yourself bound by the ordinary obligations of British gentlemen, you can destroy the power of any army or of any navy in the world. I speak boldly, because I know how those who throughout the world have created great and powerful organisations will regard this question. I say distinctly that this story, and it is a most representative one in all its aspects, represents a method the exact reverse of that by which the German army has been built up and made strong. Only by encouraging those

who are responsible for duty being done, to see effectively that that duty is done, only by making it clear that the men you wish to employ are those who will do this at all odds and any sacrifice, and no others, can you guard this Empire. I have taken no exceptional case. I could give similar stories by the dozen if it were needed. But it is not necessary. In proportion as men know the working of our system, in that proportion they know that here is its weakness.

I do not know how far any of my readers may have followed the strange stories of the rise and fall of such monarchies as those of Persia, and of other Eastern powers. Of this I am sure, that, just in so far as they have done so, they will know that their rise and fall has varied exactly with the extent to which the practical exercise of power has tended to encourage men in their service who have loyally done their duty, or those whose business it has been to pander to the vices of the ruling power. A democratic government is exposed to precisely analogous dangers, though the mode in which the danger occurs is somewhat different. Only by bringing to the light of day our own weaknesses in these respects can the evil amid us any more than amid them be cured.

This then is the danger, that whilst the only men who know what the real needs of the country are cannot act, the public who determines everything does not know. This, far more than the action of any particular statesman, stamps on our policy and on our military preparation the terrible words which have again and again proclaimed its failure, "Too late, too late."

There is a story of a certain Zulu chieftain that

always recurs to me when I read the newspaper denunciations of the blundering of our public offices and of particular soldiers and statesmen. Dingaan had around him a certain number of seers, whose business it was, in Zulu phraseology, to "smell out" criminals. For years they had served his purposes by judiciously "smelling out," that is, professing to detect as the authors of crime those whom Dingaan wished to get rid of. But the time came when Dingaan was anxious to divert from himself the unpopularity which their repeated judicial murders had gradually aroused. He, late at night, when no one saw what he did, smeared over the most sacred building in his camp with bullocks' blood. Then, calling a great assembly, he declared his disbelief in the powers of the seers, and challenged them to detect the author of this appalling sacrilege. One trembling seer after another, many of whom probably suspected the truth, denounced lyingly this man and that. At length one shrewd old man who saw that at least he could not suffer by giving vent to what he believed to be the truth, gave his verdict thus: "Who could have done this but the Heavens? I smell out the Highest." Him Dingaan spared, knowing that the old man had detected the truth. For the rest, Dingaan followed the example of Elijah when he took down the prophets of Baal "to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."

Year after year the British public plays the part of Dingaan in the first part of this tragedy. Year after year its prophets behave as did the seers whom Dingaan slew; but in Britain they are not slain, but complimented on their brilliant speeches and on their brilliant

articles. No one "smells out the Highest." Yet every expedition which starts from our shores repeats the same experience. The needed preparations, which would cost a little money, are not made at the time when careful preliminary preparation would save lives, time, and money. Then, when it is too late, money is poured out like water. The reason is simple. To spend money when the British public does not see the need for it would give opportunity for the employment of hostile party tactics—to denunciations of extravagance. To refuse to spend money when the public is aroused and interested, when the newspaper correspondents and letters from the seat of war will describe the delay, the loss of life, and the sufferings of soldiers, would, from the same point of view, be equally dangerous. That is the cause—that, of which this is only an illustration, is the one efficient cause of our weakness, of our waste, and of our lack of economical management.

What I speak of is a fact notorious in all our public offices. It is the grim standing joke of officials. "Wait," says the very man who, under the stress of the pressure of the Treasury, is refusing what he well knows to be an indispensable and economical expenditure—"wait till the army is in the field, and you will see then how we will pour out thousands where we refuse pounds now!" I am not drawing on my imagination. I am quoting actual words, actually and habitually used by those who know.

There is no pretence that the system is economical. A short time before the great reconstruction began at Aldershot, and before Mr. Stanhope had obtained his vote, I was asked by an intelligent business man who

happened to have just been in the camp, "Can you explain to me why it is that the Government keeps on building and repairing those huts at Aldershot? Any builder's apprentice could tell them that they must be most extravagant, as well as uncomfortable and inconvenient." "Yes," I answered, "I can tell you. The expense of building permanent barracks would fall on one particular year, on one particular Secretary of State for War, one particular Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the economy would appear to the credit of his successors in office." That question and those facts had again and again been laid before the public. Of course they have not been extracted from the magazine and other articles in which they have appeared by the newspapers that have reviewed those articles. They do not serve a party purpose, and nothing that does not either do that or serve for some convenient cry has a chance of that kind of publicity. But no one who has cared to know has had any difficulty in knowing the facts. The huts themselves were seen by thousands of men who must have understood the extravagance of the system, as well as the friend whose remarks I have quoted. There is only one explanation, and it is an old one. The public wishes to be deceived, and is deceived. No one disputes the cause and motive of the waste in this instance. Yet year after year it had not been remedied. As long as the public, in one instance fully known to it, sanctions a waste avowedly occasioned by party exigencies, and directly injurious to the economy and interests of the country, who is to be blamed, who deserves to be "smelled out," but the highest?—you, the public—you, Sir or Madam, who read me, in so far as you have done

nothing to concern yourself in that which is occasioned by your default.

When at last the question was taken up, though no one would wish to deprive its author of his share of the credit for doing it, there was no disguise as to the fact that it was done solely because the numerous deaths which had been caused by insanitary barracks had at last roused public opinion. Till that had happened the Government was as impotent in this case as in that of the huts at Woolwich, of which I have spoken. You would help to turn it out if it did its duty in all the innumerable cases which are analogous to this. The Budget of the year would appear to be unduly swollen. You would charge the particular Chancellor of the Exchequer with that default. Therefore you have to pay for your extravagant penny wisdom. I think that, according to the best estimates which have been repeatedly laid before successive Governments, it is about five or six times over that in the course of your life you have paid for this your fancy to have economical appearances in this particular instance presented to you. As you have paid in this instance, so you have paid in far more serious and dangerous ones, of which it is not so easy to cite facts palpable and known to all. Only rarely do these more serious facts come before you. Let me take one. During one recent year of naval manœuvres ship after ship broke down. Ship after ship failed so completely to fulfil the functions which it was built to fulfil, either in point of speed or in point of sea-going qualities or in point of efficient armament, that it is notorious that the official report on those manœuvres was suppressed, lest the *exposé* should be too serious and too alarming.

There is not the smallest doubt as to the cause of this. It was admirably explained at the time. The direct effective cause is, as always, the Budget. The Treasury desires to be able to show the best "payment by results," that is, payment by the best quotable things, the best appearances. Therefore those things which only tend to actual efficiency are skimped everywhere. They want to show the largest *nominal* speed and horse-power in proportion to the money voted. Therefore the conditions of trial on the "measured mile," by which speed is tested, are all allowed to be fictitious, and their fictitiousness is quietly winked at. Selected coal, such as is not subsequently provided for the ships when they are in presence of the enemy, is employed for the measured mile. Selected stokers, such as the Navy cannot get in sufficient numbers, thanks to the economical provisions of the Treasury, are carefully provided for the measured mile. I am not anxious to trouble you—shall I say my clerical friends—with a number of technical details which, as you rightly judge, are in no way your business. What I want to ask you is, Is it not your business if the conditions of elementary morality are not carried out in the concerns of an Empire on which you exercise so potent an influence? I do not know whether I ought to inform you that the difference which is produced in the speed of a ship by its having a selected body of stokers, as compared with a ship that has an indifferent body of them, such as you get in your average ships of war, is so great that any ship can make sure of rapidly overtaking another of nominally equal horse-power, if she have good stokers and the other indifferent ones. At least you know the nature of coal, and you

can understand the difference in driving power produced by selected coal and indifferent coal. When two such important factors act together, and when the principle implied in their use is applied to every detail of the measured mile trial, with which I need not trouble you, you may judge whether the system is a fair test of the power for war of the ships you get.

The whole question of the measured mile trial, however, is only a test example of the cause which prevents your ships from fulfilling the conditions of effective service. To show a large tonnage in proportion to the money voted is as important an element of fictitious Budgets. It is from these causes and their like that money comes to be spent on those things which show very well on paper, and is not spent on those things which are only tested by rough and effective trial, such as we have lately had in naval manœuvres. In plain English, here, as elsewhere, you wish to be deceived, and therefore you are deceived. I have appealed to my clerical friends, as I might have appealed to any honest British man, as to whether these things represent the conditions of elementary morality on which they believe, as I do, that, rather than directly on "all-shattering guns," the greatness of nations depends. I may with more certainty appeal to my commercial friends, as to whether they present the conditions of effective business.

Since these lines were written, the Secretaries of War of two consecutive administrations have agreed in declaring in the House of Commons that the existing relations between the Treasury and the War Office are utterly unsatisfactory. What that means I have here explained. I have for years regarded this as the question of all

questions in regard to National Defence. I do not think National Defence is possible or worth discussing apart from some solution of it. Perhaps the unanimity of two front benches on the subject may at length lead to reform. But, again, they are impotent without you, Sir or Madam Dingaan. I end as I began by smelling out you.[1]

[1] This chapter has been in print for nearly eight years, and though here and there phrases have been modified to bring it up to date it deals only with general principles, and does not refer to any recent events or any men or Government now or lately in office. The general principles are as true as ever.

CHAPTER II

WHAT WE HAVE TO DEFEND

In the last chapter I suggested that National Defence implied not only a defence of these islands, but of the nation—wherever the nation may be. It is important next to consider what this implies. Where is the nation? It may at first, perhaps, seem strange that it should be necessary to ask such a question. It is not, however, by any means the first time in history that those who have wanted to secure strength and unity have found it necessary to attempt answer to a similar inquiry. "Was ist das Deutschen Vaterland?" "What is the German Fatherland?"—"Italia Irridenta!" "The part of Italy that isn't yet Italy!"—are historical phrases that imply the same necessity. Naturally each country presents circumstances peculiar to itself. *The* circumstance peculiar to us which determines all others is that for us not land, but sea, is the connecting link of the nation; is for a most important part of the nation their home, and is for all of us the great factor of our wealth, of our danger, of our advantages, and of our security. A few years ago certain of our leading politicians avowed their belief that the Colonies and India were causes to

us of weakness and not of strength. They wished avowedly to restrict the nation to these islands. As a mere question of relative safety and of relative danger, if all other considerations were thrown to the winds, it was no doubt easy to argue that a small territory was much more easy to defend than a large one; that a country containing many millions of white men was much better able to take care of itself than a vast dispersed dominion, either thinly peopled or peopled with alien races. Yes! if by the very condition of their existence our island people could be kept at home. If only you could reverse all our history. If a sea-going race could be trained to keep off the sea. Since, however, every home in these islands is affected in all its home conditions by the fact that we have spread ourselves over the earth by way of the sea; since the necessary food of our population comes by sea; since the work which furnishes the means of buying bread for our working population finds its market over the sea; since our wealth is on the sea, while, of all the wealth of the world that on any day of the year is on the sea, by far the greater part is ours,—it is not quite safe to drop out of account these simple facts. Calculate as meanly as you please for the personal comfort of individual Britishers; assume all the most sordid motives that you like as the determining factors of happiness in life; yet, unless you set yourself to deceive the people as to what will secure the future comfort of their homes, you cannot talk to them as if their home was not an island home. You cannot, without deceiving them as to the very points on which you profess to enlighten them, persuade them to treat the sea as if it cut them off from

all mankind, when in fact throughout all their history it has been their highway and their cottage garden, if you prefer that to calling it their palace garden. Yes, great are cabbages, no doubt! I am far from undervaluing their importance; but for all that I believe that among vast numbers of our people the feeling of the sea as their palace garden is even more potent than the feeling of it as their garden of pot-herbs. Let me tell a story to illustrate my meaning, and then ask a question.

A personal friend of my own, a French *pasteur*, had in July 1870, before the siege of Metz began, thrown himself into the town to be of such service to the sick and wounded as he could. He had been trained as a doctor, and was therefore able to act in a double capacity. One day, after the siege had continued for many weeks, when provisions were becoming very scarce and very dear, he was walking down the streets of the town. He saw in front of him a man of apparently abject poverty stagger and fall in the streets. The bystanders assumed that the man was drunk. On coming up to him, however, my friend discovered that he had fallen in a fit produced by the attempt to stop the cravings of hunger by eating filth, with which his mouth was filled. The man was almost in the last stages of starvation. With great difficulty he was brought round. When he recovered consciousness, my friend, thinking that he must be in some terrible private trouble, asked what he could do to help him. The words in reply came so low that it was only with difficulty that the *pasteur* could catch them. "Qu'on ne rende pas Metz."—"Don't let them surrender Metz." The man who heard those words in 1870 is one of the most upright and honourable men

that I know, and he has pledged his word to me that that incident occurred exactly as I have related it. Now for my question. Is that a noble story or not? Is the feeling of the poor beggar of Metz, proud as any French monarch of the integrity of "La Pucelle," the intact fortress, the maiden city, in which he had been born, ready to starve rather than that Metz should be surrendered, something which British statesmen would wish to have among our people or not? Certain speeches which we sometimes hear are apparently directed to stifle any such feeling; not to appeal to and evoke patriotism, as was the habit of our great statesmen of the past, but to appeal to and to endeavour to evoke instead that spirit of purely individual and disintegrating selfishness which can at least be safely reckoned on to produce cheers at a political meeting.

For my part I believe that during peaceful times, when nothing occurs to arouse patriotic action or patriotic sentiment, men do not realise how large a portion of their daily life and of their ordinary happiness depends on the sense of national dignity and honour. Travellers who frequently pass from France to Germany and from Germany to France have lately been noticing a quite remarkable change in the public characteristics of the two peoples. The Frenchman, whom we all take as the representative of liveliness and vivacity, has become, at all events in all places of public entertainment, markedly silent and reserved. The "taciturn" German is boisterous in the public exhibition of his merriment and loquacity.

Is it difficult to account for the change? How long would it be before the effect was felt on the merriment

of every British cottage if British men came to think that their country was no longer one of the greatest upon earth? I do not believe that those who have little else to enjoy, enjoy less than others the sense of pride in their country. I believe that they have as strongly, if not more strongly than most others, the joy and pride of belonging to a governing and a victorious race. For them the belief in Britain's ruling the sea is as much a matter of just personal pride as it is for any monarch that ever sat upon the throne. Moreover it is among the best of them, not among the worst, that this feeling is strongest. Nor is it among those who, in the private concerns of life, are least willing to conform to the law-abiding or the self-sacrificing principle of life that this feeling is strongest. The sense of national duty, as far as I have observed, is strongest among those who have the strongest sense of private duty.

Therefore, as I believe, those who have set themselves the task of persuading our British people to disregard all care for national honour and national life, and to think only of the material interests of their own narrow immediate surroundings, have undertaken an impossible as well as a cruel work. They cannot, when the hour comes when some great national question is brought vividly before the people, prevent them from taking an interest in it. Unfortunately what they can do is this. They can take advantage of the varying moods which pass over the mind of a very industrious race. They can, at a time when no great question is apparently stirring, and when every one is busy with his own concerns, persuade men that as it has been so it will always be. The danger of our position lies just in that

fact. Each year the sea is more and more covered with the wealth of our merchants and with the products of the labour of our people. The progress has been so steady, and has been going on for so long a time, that there never has been any one particular day or year during which one could say, "See how startling a change has taken place in our whole situation!" We are all too busy to notice, or at all events to grasp, the importance of the change which has been gradually going on, of which the only record has been that of dull statistics. Yet the effect is such that there is no experience whatever in the past which will show what our position would be in the event of war with any fairly considerable naval power.

During the latter part of the war against Napoleon our fleets were everywhere so dominant that, as he said himself, not a cockle boat could put to sea without being captured by them. But at that time our wealth upon the sea was about *forty* millions only. Now it is about *seven hundred* millions, while the value of the ships in which it is carried has multiplied in even higher proportions. Then our population was only sixteen millions within these islands. Now it is about forty millions. Then, therefore, the food, the means of life, of our people could be raised and was raised at home. Now an ever-increasing proportion of it comes from abroad. Attack upon us at sea is therefore everywhere easy, and has become a far more vital matter now than it was then. The first great necessity that we must of course possess in order to secure that commerce as it now is, that commerce on which we depend for our food and our work, is a navy overwhelmingly strong—strong in proportion to the wealth which

it has to defend. With that and other matters it will be my business to deal when we come to discuss "With what we are to defend it." But when we are told that our Colonies are for us a source of weakness, it appears to me that that statement must be made by men who have never travelled across the ocean, and have never been able to imagine the sight that would greet their eyes if they did so. No matter into what distant port you go, the ships that you find there are for the most part British ships, and of those that are not British ships not a few are worked by British capital. No matter what sea you traverse, if it be a fair highway of the nations, the ships that you pass are in enormous preponderance British ships. Now is it really the case that if a ship or a fleet of ships is attacked or chased by an enemy they will be more likely to be captured because our possessions beyond seas are "here, there, and everywhere"?—I quote a phrase which I once heard a friend of mine use with a sigh, as though it was a terrible fact that one had to accept with grief. Is it really the case that our fleet going southwards along the west side of Africa is more exposed to attack because along the route we hold St. Helena, Sierra Leone, Ascension, and finally the great harbour of the Cape? Seeing that the vulnerable part of our position consists in that exposed commerce, is it really a misfortune for us that we have men of our own blood who are diligently engaged in Australia and Canada in doing all that young communities can to put their defences into order? Is it a weakness to the Empire that from sea to sea of the great American Continent, across 3000 miles of land, we should possess a railway giving us direct communication through

our own territory with our commerce in the Pacific Ocean? Is it a weakness to us in Asia to have the resources of the Indian Empire to support our vast commerce with India itself, with China, and with Japan? Not these are our weaknesses, except in so far as we leave them weak in just those respects in which we could most easily strengthen them; so far as, possessing the grandest heritage on earth, we leave it everywhere to be the prey of the first spoiler who chooses to arise and take it; so far as, possessing over all the earth points of vantage and security which any other nation would at all cost make secure, we, the richest nation on earth, are too poor to take advantage of them. Our politicians are men trained in the art of winning votes in the House of Commons. Training begets habit, habit fixes nature itself. Not to the interests and security of the Empire, but to the means which will win a vote in the House, it is the fixed nature of the statesman whom you have trained to look. How, by the very condition of things, can the two points of view be identical?

The knowledge on which a great statesman necessarily acts is just what he cannot lay before the House of Commons. As long as it was a question of gaining the confidence of the House by a certain character, by the knowledge of the man, as it was, for instance, even in the days of Lord Palmerston, there could perhaps hardly be a better means of securing a statesman who really cared to do his duty to the State and was competent to do it, than by judging of his power in the House. But the same difficulty appears to attend us here as is beginning to trouble us in regard to our competitive examinations. Just as success in the examination, as soon as it ceases

to be a test of independent excellence and becomes itself the object of effort, is almost purely mischievous; so the test of success in the House of Commons, when it becomes itself the object after which men strive, involves conditions dangerous to the State. Our wisest examiners are most alive to the danger in their case, and are most anxious to provide all the remedies against it that they can. Is it too much to expect that for the sake of national safety the House of Commons will watch for themselves the same danger in their case? Every intelligent British man who watches it at least contributes something towards that end.

It is from the very nature of the case impossible to judge whether each separate proposal made by a politician is statesmanlike or not. Publication of all reasons and motives to the House of Commons means publication to the world. If it is known to statesmen that certain designs hostile to Britain have been secretly formed, the very last thing that it would be good for the country to have done would be to have that knowledge made public. But we can judge of the general character of a statesman. In proportion as the country wishes to get its work done, rather than to have its palate tickled, it will get its work done. There is immense truth in that saying of Carlyle's that the reason why Robespierre became the representative of France and Cromwell of England during the respective revolutionary periods of the two countries, was that at the time France deserved to have Robespierre and that the England of his days deserved to have Cromwell. No doubt during calmer times such effects are produced less rapidly. But in the main our statesmen are what we make them.

For his contribution towards the making of them every one of us is responsible. If we want statesmen whose views are essentially those of Little Pedlington applied to the government of a great country, we shall have them. If we want statesmen who understand the question of National Defence for our great inheritance to be one of the most difficult and one of the grandest problems that were ever set before the mind of man, we shall have them. On one great question of the day some of our statesmen are at least in earnest. No one who comes closely into contact with them, and is not himself involved in the same encrusted effect of habit and training that they are, believes that on the question of National Defence more than one here and there is in earnest. See if the first answer that is made to you by any politician on such a question is not, "Oh, but the House of Commons would never sanction such a course as that." "Really, any one who knows the various cliques and sets in the House of Commons can assure you that any such proposition as that would not have a chance in the House."

Now I humbly submit that the great business of a deliberative assembly is to deliberate—that the great value of public deliberation is this, that error shrinks and shrivels in the light of day, and that in that same light of day truth grows and flourishes. If it be the case, as it in fact is the case, that except at moments of panic the question of the defence of the Empire—if you like the term—of the nation as I prefer to call it—is never discussed at all, I submit that the opinion about it of every separate clique in the House of Commons matters very little indeed. I have a very great and a hereditary

reverence for the House of Commons, as the grandest of all deliberative assemblies. That reverence is, however, founded on the fact that, as yet at least, the majority of its members have not accepted the chains which Burke declared would be fatal to the House. They have not taken their places "pledged not to deliberate."

It is not possible that very many men in the House should have carefully examined questions which have never with adequate pressure been brought before them.

If, as is in truth the case, enormous changes in our whole position among the nations have gradually come about, to which their attention has not been directed, the mere opinions they have casually taken up about them do not necessarily determine what their judgment will be after they have adequately considered the facts. Their present opinions are little more than registers of the conclusions wisely drawn by an elder generation from a different condition of things.

The great merit of our constitution lies just in this, that it is of such a kind that it does not tempt us to think that the sun rises and sets subject to it; but that it is, on the contrary, adapted to the fact that the "sons of men are wiser with the setting of the suns," and had better modify their action in accordance with their partial and gradual discoveries of fact and truth, not attempting to bind truth and fact and the progress of history by their opinions. I shall have to press this point again more fully in a later chapter, but, in discussing the question of the enormous change which has within the last eighty years taken place in "What we have to defend," I am anxious to meet at once the one grand

and final argument which I find continually thrown in my face on all such occasions.

With those who do not belong to the House the great thing that appears to awe them, and to prevent their facing facts, is "Public Opinion" itself. Now what is this same deity "Public Opinion"? Apparently it is what everybody thinks that everybody else thinks. If no one in the kingdom has a better reason than that for forming his judgment, of what value can the aggregate judgment be? Surely the ultimate value of Public Opinion itself must depend on the judgment of those men who do examine facts for themselves, and on the extent to which they gradually bring round Public Opinion to realise facts. As far as my observation has gone, that result follows with almost surprising rapidity.

Therefore, as the one thing for which I care at this moment is to carry with me you, Sir, or you, Madam, who are reading what I am saying, I pray you not to shiver because you think that everybody else thinks something other than what I say. In the first place, that is not true. In the second place, if you will get hold of the facts, will realise their importance, and will spread them, such semblance of truth as there is in the statement will very soon disappear.

It would be very odd if the millions of the electorate in the past or the present moment understood our position. Those of us who have been for years studying the question are to a man obliged to confess that we have only slowly come to realise it ourselves. Having realised it, we have been under exceptional difficulties in bringing the truth before the English public. Many of us have been tongue-tied by office. Many are so still. Few of

those who are not in some such way tongue-tied have really examined the question. Though some of us have been working hard to get the facts known, it is one thing to write and to speak, it is another to be read and heard. To use a happy phrase once employed by Mr. Gladstone, it is yet another to be "marked, learned, and inwardly digested."

Therefore we ask you to help us, not for our sakes but for your own, for the sake of our glorious country, for the sake of your wives and families, and for the poor and ignorant of the land who, little as they know it, will suffer appallingly if facts are not faced in time.

I have hitherto spoken of our Commerce, and the fact that I want to press home in regard to it is that that enormous and overwhelming mass of wealth which radiates from Britain over the sea in every direction is a thing which has practically come into being during ninety-two years of peace. I say ninety-two years of peace, because I take my date from Trafalgar. Since Trafalgar, except for the short American War, the seas have been for British ships a peaceful highway. During that time this enormous and overwhelming wealth has grown up. I do not know that I shall so well bring this truth home by mere reference to statistics as by quoting a very remarkable saying of Mr. Gladstone's. Speaking in 1873 of the period since 1815, he declared that if the rate of the accumulation of wealth then going on could have been substituted in 1815 for the rate of accumulation as it was at that time, the mere *difference* between the two maintained for the fifty-eight years would have replaced the accumulations of all previous centuries. Now between 1805 and 1815 our progress was relatively

rapid in the development of commerce, and since 1873 it has been enormous. Therefore for my purpose as a question of what we have to defend, it is not too much to say that the problem is an absolutely new problem. The wealth which we had to defend at the moment when our fleets simply cleaned the seas of every hostile power was as nothing to that which we now possess. Strictly speaking it was as 2 : 35. The commerce of Canada, actually itself ranking among the second powers in point of its maritime marine, and that of India, as well as the commerce of Australia and New Zealand, are creations of the period since Trafalgar. All these are steadily and rapidly growing.

Therefore, whatever may be needed for the defence of our possessions beyond the sea, the difficulty and the danger of defending them are nothing like so great as would be the difficulty of defending this appalling Commerce if the politics of Little Pedlington prevail, if Britain shrink into herself, and, careless of her great Indian Empire and her Colonies, dwindle into the nut from which she sprang. The mighty genius, towering to the skies, once coaxed by the fisherman into returning to the box from which he had arisen, was, according to the charming tale of Grimm, easily locked up again and was lost for ever in the seas. It is a true fable of the fate of Britain if she shrinks from her glorious destiny and tries to make her giant limbs fit into her cradle.

Therefore it is needful next to consider what these possessions are which we have to defend.

I have found in talking to some of our most intelligent working-men, that they have never had brought before

them the extent of the efforts which have been made by our Colonies to provide for their own defence. I very respectfully submit it to the conscience of every member of the Legislature whether that is not a disgrace to every separate one of them. What is the use of talking about the Confederation of the Empire if you take no steps to remove the jealousies of the different parts of it? I am certain that if the men of whom I am speaking had never heard of the self-sacrificing efforts of their cousins beyond the sea, the vast mass of the constituencies never heard of them. I have found it necessary to explain—

A. That India pays every penny of her own defence, including the cost of the army which is kept up there.

B. That Canada has created for herself a militia of very great value, at present numbering nearly 35,000 men, and has actually undertaken the cost of building the defences of the great harbour of Esquimalt, we providing only the armament, whilst she supplies the garrison.

C. That Australia has undertaken elaborate works of coast defence, has created a militia numbering 20,000, and has arranged to contribute a subsidy for a fleet in her waters.

D. That at the Cape and in each of the smaller colonies, each according to their power, similar efforts have been made.

Man for man, there can be no question whatever that, between Tom Smith at home and Jim Jones in any one of our colonies and possessions beyond seas, Jim Jones has made personal sacrifices to fulfil his share in the defence of the nation of which Tom Smith has never dreamed.

Only a few years ago I have heard at dinner-parties politicians of a certain stamp deciding the question in favour of what was then the popular fad—the scheme to "confederate the Colonies and let them go"—by the conclusive argument, "Why should Tom Smith at home pay for Jim Jones in Australia." That contention was knocked out of time by the Statistical Society. It was shown conclusively that so far was it from the truth that Tom Smith at home had to pay for Jim Jones abroad, that on the contrary Tom Smith at home got better wages and more work, because Jim Jones his cousin in Australia was living there under our flag instead of under an alien one; that for actual business purposes and with value in hard cash the trade followed the flag.

But it is a lamentable proof how little Imperial in the best sense of the term our politics have been that, despite the acres of speeches which every year cover the newspapers and are addressed to the constituencies, our people at home know nothing of the other fact that the Colonies not only supply our best customers, but that they have thrown themselves into the question of National Defence with a zeal which with us is represented by the loyal enthusiasm of many volunteers, but of which the mass of our population knows nothing.

In addition, however, to the greater Colonies, we have footholds all over the world in the shape of our great harbour fortresses—Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Bermuda; and our defended ports, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Hong Kong, Singapore; and defended coaling-stations, St. Helena, Sierra Leone, Simon's Bay, Mauritius, St. Lucia.

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of these places to the safety of our commerce, and to the

unity of the defence of our Imperial nation. Wherever, at any of even these minor places, there is an Englishman, Irishman, or Scotsman, who can either himself take up his share of national defence, or, better still, be employed in developing the defensive power of local races loyal to our rule, that part of the work has been carried out as far as our poverty-stricken Treasury could afford to assist the armament. But in many of these places the people absolutely cannot, without some aid from home, bear the expense entailed in furnishing the whole of the cost of the defence which they could make for themselves. As long as that condition prevails in England, which is represented by the Lord Mayor's having to send round the hat to furnish the necessary equipment for our London volunteers, it is not to be expected that the aid of distant volunteers will be eagerly supported from home if money is needed to enable them to do their work.

It is notorious that had the discussions which took place with the Colonial representatives been published at the time when they came to London some few years ago, a few bitter truths would have been heard by people at home. The representatives were loyal to the backbone, but they had not been prepared to meet with meanness in dealing with the old folk at home. In case after case they undertook to do things for us which we ought to have done for ourselves. They undertook to do them. They saved us a little money. That is a costly economy, however, which tends to sever the joints of this Imperial realm—this realm, Imperial in its extent, in its population, in its wealth, so sorely needing, since it cannot compete with other empires in the singleness of purpose of one despot, to develop and cherish another Imperial unity.

From what is done in the green tree judge what is likely to be done in the dry.

If Australia and Canada are met with what they at least look upon as meanness, what will be the fate of little and precious St. Helena—not to say distant Singapore and Hong Kong?

I must, however, lest I be misunderstood, stop to point out that the meanness to which I here refer is just that of which I have again and again spoken, the resultant of confusion at home. It is the case here, as always, of Lord Chatham and Sir Richard Strachan. No one in Britain wishes to be mean to the Colonies. Least of all do Ministers who meet them in conference wish to be mean. The British people does not know, is not made to understand; and they who certainly do not wish to meet the loyal efforts of their cousins with meanness are made into the effective cause of all that is mean. The Treasury dare not be other than mean. If it were anything else, think of the rival placards at an election showing relative expenditure!

To pass on, however, to the question of the vital importance of these stations "here, there," thank God, "and everywhere."

During the time since Trafalgar, as all men know, the factors that have revolutionised the whole question of commerce and of marine defence are the Electric Telegraph and Steam. Steam implies coal, and for high steaming for all but a few ships coal at very few days' interval. During peace time it is pleasant enough to be able to drop into Madeira or Lisbon and to pick up such coal as our ships want. In war time we can only securely rely upon our own harbours, therefore we can

only rely upon our own fortified harbours. Therefore, in taking account of what we have to defend, whether Commerce or our Colonies or India, since communication with these would be cut off if coal were not available, these coaling-stations are vitally important to us. A great docking harbour like Malta, Bermuda, or Halifax has an altogether other importance of its own, but we can spare neither one nor the other. Nor, where an isolated position like that of the Falkland Islands is distant from anything else, and is, as a glance at the map will show, the one foothold that we have for the security of our trade round South America into the Pacific Ocean, can we spare that. If the great course of our trade be examined it will be seen that it runs in vast volume to India partly by way of the Suez Canal, partly round the Cape, and from India spreads out into various streams towards China, Australia, New Zealand, etc. The line by the Suez Canal has become the great peace route. Exposed as it is to danger throughout its whole course, few who have studied the question believe for one moment that it can be a war route. For war our highway must be round the Cape.

Hitherto I have spoken of the trade and colonies of Britain, and have said nothing of home defence. I have deliberately kept that question to the last—first, because I am most anxious not for a moment to admit the notion that National Defence can be restricted to these islands; secondly, because, even for the safety of the population of these islands, I look upon our sea-borne commerce as far the most weak and assailable point we have. Nevertheless there are few things about which more popular fallacies prevail than as to the special

safety of our island home, without any efforts of our own to defend it.

A friend of mine, not a soldier, but a student of history, tells me that he once asked in a large assembly of Englishmen, containing barristers, doctors, and other educated men, how many invasions of England there had been. He was promptly answered, "Not one!" Celts, Romans, Saxons, Danes, Normans, the French in John's time, the almost endless series during the Wars of the Roses, ending with that which put Henry VII. on the throne, were all forgotten. That William III.'s, and even the Duke of Monmouth's, were successful landings and undoubted invasions in their inception, and that the Scotch rising in 1745 only missed being successful because a body of troops brought from the Netherlands effected a landing before French troops, which were embarked for the purpose, had effected theirs, were facts unknown or unremembered by any one in the room. Yet even the vast number of the earlier invasions, all successful as they were, ought to point this lesson, that if for not quite two centuries we have enjoyed immunity from war in Britain, that has been due to the overwhelming superiority of our fleet during the great wars of the period, and to ninety-two years of peace since Trafalgar. During these ninety-two years of peace the conditions of naval and military warfare have changed almost as completely as they did between the time of Henry VII.'s landing and Trafalgar. If in the next war we are to retain the same immunity, it can only be by facing the conditions of warfare by sea and land at the present moment as thoroughly as we faced them at the beginning of the century. Therefore, as I have shown

In the first place, the conditions of life upon the Continent have altogether changed. The creation of railways, telegraphs, and other means of communication, as well as the development of commercial life, have no doubt made Continental nations in some respects far more independent of the sea, for the actual means of living, than they were in the days of Napoleon. But, on the other hand, the habitual consumption of articles of tropical produce, coffee, sugar, tea, has become universal, and for these and many other things sea transport is still indispensable. It may almost be doubted whether, taking all things into consideration, more especially the developed necessities of civilisation, the loss of all sea transport would not be felt more severely in the present time than it was then. On the other hand, the whole peace conditions of the Continent have been prepared and adapted for war to an extent that was hardly possible even during the long reign of war from 1789 to 1815. Taking, however, into account the way in which the forces on the Continent are now arrayed against one another, it may be reasonably doubted whether the power of Britain, if it be properly used in behalf of the liberties of the world, is not still as great, except in one respect to be noted immediately, as Captain Mahan has shown that it was during the great war. The forces, therefore, which are apt to impress British men with the idea that we are already reduced to the position of a state like Belgium, and can only look on in helpless impotence at the struggles of stupendous masses, are by no means so invulnerable to the pressure of Britain as they are apt to be assumed to be.

The one exception which has to be made against our present condition in comparing our power then and now is continually forgotten. Captain Mahan has admirably brought out the facts. The supreme position which our Navy occupied during the great war was by no means due to any natural inaptitude on the part of the French for naval operations. During the immediately preceding struggle, we had lost the American Colonies because we had lost the command of the sea. In the beginning of the Revolutionary War the French Fleet had been reduced to complete inefficacy by the disorders in France. After a few feeble attempts to maintain its position under these circumstances in the open sea, it was driven into harbours where it was impossible for it to keep up its fighting efficiency. It is therefore absurd to look upon this as representing in any way the necessary permanent relation between the two Navies.

Among the elements, therefore, of possible future danger with which we ought to reckon, is the undoubted high efficiency of the present French Fleet. To live upon a tradition of the past which shows us everywhere during that particular war inferior numbers of British ships driving before them, or destroying, French fleets, is a dangerous misconception of history. We may hope everything from the skill and valour of our own sailors; we have no right to assume that those qualities will not be found among the French.

Not a few calmly-thinking French sailors believe that the change which has taken place in the nature of ships since 1815 has tended very greatly to the advantage of their own navy. They say, not without much reason, that the direct influence on naval success of the more

seafaring character of our population and of the greater hardihood and physical vigour which they frankly attribute to our sailors, was much more certain in those days than now. They consider that a time has come when mechanical skill in construction, and the influence of the engineer, have become far more potent factors than strictly seafaring skill. It is a question on which it is impossible to pronounce without the dire experiment of war. But it is right, in considering the whole of the situation, that British men should realise that that view has to be taken into account.[1]

Furthermore, the development of British free trade has so greatly increased the proportion in which our population depends for food from abroad since those times, that it may be doubted whether in studying Captain Mahan's statement of the case we ought not to allow for the increased pressure that would be put upon us by anything that threatened the sources of our food supply. Considering, however, the way in which that one side of the question has been pressed upon us of late years, it is not a little consolatory to have laid before us, with Captain Mahan's impartiality and as a result of his admirable research, the fact, that our enemies early in the great war looked forward with complete confidence to their being able to bring Britain to her knees by attacks upon her commerce alone, even after they had themselves lost the power to contest our supremacy at sea. Captain Mahan has shown clearly that it was the utter failure of this attempt during all the earlier period of the war which made Napoleon face

[1] Kiel and Crete have, however, both impressed foreign sailors with the practical superiority of our own.

risks, the nature of which he fully realised, in order to prepare for making an actual descent upon our shores.

The development of British commerce has become so enormous that it now presents a much more vulnerable mark to an enemy than it did during the Revolutionary War. We may therefore admit that we are only able to judge from the lesser to the greater, and to treat the experiences of that war as a lesson on a relatively small scale, so far as the immunity of our present commerce from the attacks of petty depredators is concerned. Nevertheless I do not myself believe that any one who will be at the pains to weigh all that Captain Mahan has to urge upon the subject, can fail to realise that his historical evidence has introduced a consideration which has been too much forgotten in the controversies of late years. On the whole, his history tends to show that if we take adequate precautions for the protection of our commerce during war, the percentage of loss which we are likely to incur, though it may be very inconvenient and serious, will not be deadly. Relatively, therefore, this demonstration enhances the importance of the question of invasion; for if attacks upon our commerce will not be decisive of anything, a nation which wishes to crush us will be forced to attempt invasion or to accept a position of great disadvantage. It is therefore necessary to discuss all the more earnestly those conditions which tend to affect the possibility of direct invasion of our shores.

This is very important, because there has been a tendency of late years among some of our naval writers to scoff at the idea of our maintaining any "second line of defence" at all. Their argument has been, that if the

Navy be supreme upon the seas, there can be no risk of invasion whatever. If the Navy be not supreme then Britain must starve. Now the whole effect of Captain Mahan's work is to show that the process of "starving" Britain would be, to say the least of it, a very slow and difficult one. On the other hand, despite the changes which have to be taken into account in the conditions of both land and sea fighting, Captain Mahan has shown more clearly than it had ever been shown before, that the question of successful invasion was even then a matter of only a very few days of local supremacy for an enemy's fleet. What was necessary to it was not that the supremacy of Britain on the seas should be permanently destroyed, but that during a given period that supremacy should not be able to assert itself at the right place.[1]

It may be and it is quite true that had Napoleon succeeded in landing his army upon our coast because there was not sufficient naval force available to resist him, he would still have been liable to find his retreat cut off, and his communications with France severed by the restored supremacy of the British Fleet. It is not the less obvious that the importance of this fact would depend upon the nature and degree of resistance which his forces might meet with in Britain. If he could so completely sweep away all opposition on land as to dictate terms in London, he felt certain of securing his own retreat. He would have been in no worse a position in that matter than he found himself in, in Egypt after the battle of the Nile. Despite the loss of all his communications with France, he was

[1] These views have been amplified with admirable force in Mahan's *Life of Nelson*.

able to effect the capture of Cairo and the complete conquest of Egypt itself. As the conquest of Egypt produced no very serious pressure upon the Mistress of the Seas, his failure at Acre made the ultimate abandonment of Egypt inevitable. Britain could at her leisure land forces in Egypt which would make the position of the French army an impossible one.

It is, however, important to remember that it was only in this indirect way that the command of the sea enabled us even to turn the French out of Egypt. It was the actual land-fighting at Acre and the success of Sir Ralph Abercromby's expedition at Abukir that enforced the withdrawal of the French army. Applying the case to a possible success of Napoleon's in Britain, all the circumstances are reversed—the pressure would be applied directly to the mistress of the very fleet which endangered his retreat. Had the fleet which threatened Napoleon in Egypt been not British but Egyptian, there can be little doubt that Napoleon would have been able to enforce terms which, if they did not actually involve the surrender of the fleet, would have certainly enabled him to open up his own communications with France.

There is a small school of naval writers who treat it as an insult to our Navy to speak of it as our "first line of defence," and scoff at the idea of there being any use in maintaining our home army, more especially the volunteers and militia. It has happily been repudiated by our most distinguished sailors. No one could have spoken out more strongly on the subject than Sir Geoffrey Hornby did a few years before his death; while Admiral Colomb, who has used expressions that

made some of his friends fear that he had committed himself to the views of the school in question, has with equal emphasis repudiated them. It is only, therefore, important to notice the matter in so far as any language of this kind tends to weaken the confidence and zeal of our volunteers, or to furnish a Government with excuses for not supplying them with what is necessary to efficiency.

The difference between Britain maintaining a force at home adequate to resist such an army as could be landed on her shores, and Britain denuded of all home defence—trusting solely to her Navy for protection—is admirably illustrated by the circumstance of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. If the land force at home were so inadequate that the commander of a hostile army could as completely subdue Britain as, despite the supremacy of our fleet, Napoleon in fact subdued Egypt, the fleet after its first failure to stop the invaders would avail us nothing. If, on the other hand, the invaders were met by a firm and obstinate resistance, terrible as the losses which would be inflicted upon Britain would be, the fate of the invaders would sooner or later be certain, unless the fleet had not only failed us in the hour of invasion, but had permanently lost its supremacy even within the narrow seas. While, therefore, no one can exaggerate the importance, for the safety and the maintenance of the power and the wealth of Britain, of a navy which shall at all times be supreme not only in the narrow seas, but elsewhere, it would be madness to ignore the necessity for an entirely independent system of home defence.

Moreover, as I have often insisted elsewhere, there

are avowedly circumstances in the present condition of naval warfare which, without in the least tending to shake confidence in our retaining our command of the sea if we will make the efforts that are necessary to do so, do make it exceedingly doubtful whether the ablest admiral that we have could guarantee us against a temporary disaster. All sorts of new mechanical forces have come into play since the great war, and no adequate test of their effect has been supplied by recent war experience. I a few years ago publicly put the question at Aldershot to two of our ablest sailors, whether they either of them felt confidence or believed that any one else, whose judgment could be depended upon, did, as to the outcome of the next great naval engagement. Both of them frankly avowed that the complications of the problem were too great for any human foresight. We practically know hardly at all whether the ram, the torpedo, or the big gun are to be the deciding elements of future warfare. Still less do we know what effect high explosives are likely to produce in naval any more than in land war.

It is said that our best authorities on the subject believe that the difficulties of creating a permanent high explosive have been overcome. That is an element in our favour, the importance of which cannot be overrated. The question involved is so serious a one that, though I have often mentioned it before, I do not think that I ought to omit a full statement for my present readers.

Germany and France both attach so much importance to the effects of high explosive shells that they have spent millions of money upon preparing both to use them

and to resist them. Year by year they have continued to store vast materials for the manufacture of these terrible instruments of destruction. France, at all events till lately, made up fresh every year sufficient high explosive material for the loading of all the shells that she will require for a land campaign. I believe she does so still. Germany, in presence of the great array of French fortifications which has been constructed along her frontier, reckons upon the effect of high explosive shells carried into the field for their demolition. Naturally, on a subject which both Governments keep as secret as they possibly can, one cannot always quote the evidence on which one relies for such a statement as this. I am obliged to say this because a certain writer, who shall be nameless, an able man, but one of the least courteous of controversialists, has poured scorn on my words because I have not cited authority for all that I have said. There are times when one can only rely upon the presumption of one's friends that one is not likely either to be a wilful liar or an extremely careless sifter of evidence. I am as certain as I am of my own existence that if I could quote my authorities my critic would change his tune.

There is at all events one evidence of the importance which the German Government attaches to the matter which there has been no attempt to conceal. Under the eyes of any one who has chosen to see it, under my eyes amongst others, they have been piling, around the forts at Metz for instance, at an expenditure which must have been enormous, debris and materials, into the details of which I need not enter, but so designed as to afford protection against the new shells. Those who

are willing to believe that an economical Government like that of Germany throws away money in this sort of way, without the most careful preliminary inquiry as to its necessity, are people with whom it is quite useless to argue.

It is said that we have been carrying out a series of experiments with high explosives, and that several years ago we ascertained the fact that one of them, as effective as the rest, would resist the effects of time and change of climate. What is certain is, that very many years ago the question in France and Germany passed out of the stage of experiment and entered into that of practical preparation for war. What is equally certain is, that in a matter in which the preparation for practical use must take many years, we have not advanced one step beyond the experimental stage.

I have never been able to understand how it has been that, since many years ago Lord Charles Beresford raised this question in the House of Commons, no attention has there been ever directed to the matter. I can only suppose that the success with which at that time Mr. Stanhope took what is called "a debating advantage" of Lord Charles Beresford has alarmed other members.

Unfortunately the question of high explosives is one like that of the breechloading rifle at the time of the Danish War of 1864. Anybody who chose to investigate the matter knew in 1864 everything that afterwards staggered Europe in 1866. It was supposed to be a "technical question," therefore it did not interest the House of Commons. Trusting to the indifference of members, and their readiness to laugh at anybody who talked about what members did not understand, any

Minister could have raised a laugh in 1864 against the man who was such a fool as to suppose that the insignificant little state of Prussia had adopted an invention which two years later would make her supreme in Europe. Yet two years later exaggerated panic succeeded to indifference. Europe felt itself to be unarmed in presence of Prussia.

Similarly when Lord Charles Beresford asked that a proposed Commission to inquire into the nature of our national defences should investigate the effect upon them which had been produced by the invention of high explosives, it was very easy to raise a laugh against him. Mr. Stanhope triumphantly inquired whether Lord Charles Beresford's reference to "high explosives" did not show the utter absurdity of the whole idea of referring such questions to a Commission. If the Commission were to inquire into all sorts of little technical matters like that, what prospect was there of its ever coming to an end? Of course in a House quite unfamiliar with the question, Mr. Stanhope's retort settled the matter. To any one who understood at all what Lord Charles Beresford was speaking of, it was abundantly clear that he was right and Mr. Stanhope utterly wrong.

At that time the point that had been raised was this: Lord Wolseley and other soldiers had declared that it was impossible for them to be in any way responsible for the safety of London without knowing to what extent they were to depend upon the Navy for making the passage of a hostile army impossible, or for reducing its numbers within moderate limits. An universal feeling had been excited that some steps must be taken

to deal with the question of National Defence as a whole, lest between the two stools of the War Office and the Admiralty the country itself should fall to the ground. It was under these circumstances that Lord Charles Beresford asked that in any such investigation the question of "high explosives" should be taken into account.

Now in the then condition of our knowledge in regard to these shells, the situation was just this: France was already engaged in those vast accumulations of material for high explosives of which I have spoken. As I have the strongest reasons for believing—reasons which it is exceedingly unlikely that many others in England know—she had conducted secret experiments which had convinced the authorities in that country that guns that could be employed in the field were by means of these shells capable of destroying all forms of permanent fortification not specially prepared to resist them. She has four great factories for the manufacture of the material. There appears to be no reason to doubt that she could as easily fill shells for naval purposes as for land work. Now when at Aldershot I put publicly to the most distinguished of our admirals[1] the question, whether he thought it would be possible for a fleet which possessed no shells filled with high explosives to meet another which had a large supply of them, his answer to me was, that of course when war came we must at all risk put the high explosive shells on board: that is to say, that we were at the time of Lord Charles Beresford's question, and are now, in this position, that we have not ventured past the experimental stage in reference to these explosives at all;

[1] Sir Geoffrey Hornby.

that none of our sailors have had any training in handling them; and that so serious is the question that we should at the last moment have to make an experiment under the dire circumstances of war, in a matter on which those to whom we should be opposed had already reached the stage of large practice.

Furthermore, at that time at all events, our position represented this exceptional danger. France at least looked upon the question of the creation of a permanent high explosive as an insoluble one, and therefore met the difficulty by the continual creation of new material and the fresh storage of shells. We, being obliged to draw in our ships for any great naval engagement from distant parts of the world, could only have on board them, unless after long delay, shells which if filled with high explosives would have been liable to all that danger of deterioration which France took such pains to avoid.

The question therefore demanded investigation in this sense, that if the evidence we had on the subject were true, then we might well wake up some fine morning to find that it had settled for us all that matter of national defence which any Commission of inquiry could investigate. Our Fleet might easily find itself in presence of one which, by no fault of our sailors or officers, it was unable to meet.

In the nature of things it is not possible that there should be any other subject which could be submitted to a Commission so important as this then was. If it were omitted from the inquiry, the investigation was not worth making. Yet by pooh-poohing the distinguished sailor who raised the inquiry in the House

of Commons, by trusting to the complete ignorance on the subject of the House itself, Mr. Stanhope was able to treat this as a sample of the ridiculous little details with which a Commission would have to deal if it attempted what Lord Charles Beresford proposed. A more terrible example of what taking a "debating advantage" in the House of Commons means cannot be conceived. It means solely, playing upon the ignorance of members to induce them to vote with you upon what may haply turn out to be the ruin of the country.

If it be true that our own chemists have succeeded in creating an explosive which is not liable to injury either by jolting about in a waggon or by lapse of time, certainly one great disadvantage of the situation has been removed for us. If we are able to store adequate material to have the shells available for issue, and to practise our soldiers and sailors with them, the difficulty involved in the extent of our vast Empire, and the consequent long voyages of our ships, need not trouble us. But at the present moment we are practically in as bad a position as ever, so far as the military use of these terrible new engines of war is concerned. If we have realised their importance, we are like those Athenians who knew what was right, but did not like doing it. If, on the other hand, we are trusting, in the teeth of all the experiments that have been conducted on the Continent, to the results we have obtained at Lydd, then it is necessary to remark that those who have travelled through every country in Europe, to the several experimental grounds of the Great Powers, declare that the investigations which we make on any subject of the kind are so insignificant as

compared with those made by others, that they scarcely deserve to be reckoned at all. The wealthiest country in Europe, we skimp the money that is allowed for experiment to an extent that makes it only an insignificant fraction of what is allowed by such countries as Austria and Russia. When, therefore, an able man like Sir George Clarke quotes as decisive on this subject "experiments at Lydd," "though it make the unwary laugh, it cannot but make the judicious grieve." Till this question is more satisfactorily settled than it is, we certainly must include among the dangers against which we have to defend ourselves—a possible invasion of Britain.

Even if this particular danger be warded off, it illustrates very forcibly the present uncertainties of naval warfare, and the fact that we do not know what changes may arise as a consequence of the progress of invention.

In regard to invasion generally, perhaps the most permanent risk that we run may be most happily expressed in these only too true words of George Eliot's: "The sense of security more frequently springs from habit than from conviction, and for this reason it often subsists after such a change in the conditions as might have been expected to suggest alarm. The lapse of time during which a given event has not happened, is, in the logic of habit, constantly alleged as a reason why the event should never happen, even when the lapse of time is precisely the added condition which makes the event imminent."

To men who, like myself, have had to go on isolated military duty in different parts of the country, these words

come home with a force that is partly comic, and partly pathetic. It is tolerably obvious that if there be even a possibility of such a temporary failure of the protection of our fleet, as seems at least to be indicated by the conditions which I have explained, then it is only a matter of common prudence that we soldiers should sometimes consider what the circumstances of actual fighting in this country would be. It does not seem to be an exaggerated precaution that we should examine the positions of greatest advantage for our own army, and should endeavour to obtain such information as would be useful in the event of war at home. As a matter of fact this is, of course, systematically done. The conversations that one is not unfrequently involved in in the course of doing it, with local residents, are very suggestive. George Eliot's words might be taken as the text of most of these.

To not a few isolated spinsters and other nervous persons, the mere fact of soldiers considering the question of home defence at all causes so much alarm and anxiety, that they have to put away from them the unpleasant idea with some such sentence as, "Oh, of course I know it's only make-believe; it never would really happen," and so on. And yet it may be doubted if those good folks realise at all that the question, whether "it" ever really will happen, depends almost entirely on the success of their navy, and that again on a House of Commons which laughs at high explosives, just as Belinda laughs at Hell.

I say "*almost* entirely," for there is another element in that question as to which it is well to put on record a few plain facts. If a Channel tunnel should ever be

constructed between us and France, it would be highly possible that the Navy might have very little to say to the defence of these islands. In fact, comically enough, one of the few distinguished sailors whom Sir Edward Watkin used to quote on his own side of the question once put the matter boldly: "The Navy has defended the country for a great many centuries. It is about time that the Army should take its turn." Now, the Army might, from a professional point of view, be glad enough to undertake that operation, if, like other armies which are charged with the duty of saving their homes from invasion, its force was made adequate for the purpose. It would be an expensive amusement for the country to make it so for the sake of getting a few cheap eggs from the Continent, and saving a little sea-sickness; but Sir William Hewett was no doubt right that it will become necessary. For, from the moment that the tunnel is made, the security of the country from invasion will no longer depend upon those "inviolate seas" which have hitherto guarded her, but upon a fortress designed to protect the mouth of the tunnel, and to cover the means for its rapid destruction. It is not easy to quote the case of any first-class fortress so happily placed that, where there has been any exceptional motive for its surprise, it has not at some time or other been captured, no matter how perfect the arrangements for its defence have been. Many of the very strongest fortifications in the world have been suddenly seized without any warning having been given to the country to which they belonged. In most of these cases the fortress was placed on a site exceptionally favourable for natural defence. Any fortress established at Dover must have

its position chosen, not because it is exceptionally favourable for the erection of such a work, but because it must be close to the point of danger.

All the different methods that have been devised for retaining in our hands the possibility of destroying the Channel Tunnel at a moment's notice ultimately depend upon the constant maintenance, year after year, of incessant human vigilance. With the greatest prize in the world perpetually offered to the men who should at any moment succeed in overcoming that vigilance, the strain would be indeed severe. The chances that sooner or later the skill of the assailant would outwit some less careful guardian are almost indefinitely strong.

To any one unaccustomed to the history of sieges and the surprises that have taken place in war, or for that matter during peace time, every ordinary fortress seems to present a combination for defence so formidable that it is scarcely intelligible how it could ever be captured. It will, perhaps, at all events be believed, by most of those who discuss the question, that a country so warlike as France is not likely to have omitted any possible precaution in the construction of fortresses for the defence of her land frontier, on which she has expended within the last twenty years untold millions of money. Yet with every precaution that she has been able to devise, no French soldier of eminence ventures to trust to that costly series of fortifications for the ultimate defence of France. That defence depends on an army, within whose ranks every full-grown man in the Republic as he arrives at maturity is enrolled. With an army constantly maintained in such a condition of efficiency that it would be complete in all its parts and

all its armaments, and have enrolled numbers proportionate to the whole virile population of France, the vast fortifications which cover the frontier are intended only to serve as a means of gaining time and facilitating operations.

What hope, then, is there that, in selecting for artificial fortification a spot to which we are tied by considerations altogether independent of those which tend to make any particular site peculiarly difficult to attack, we shall be able to obtain even such security from it as France has from any one of those fortifications on which she has no dream of relying as her great defence. To obtain even such security as France now possesses we should have to establish the same conditions as exist in France. We should require an army based on a principle of universal enlistment such as she has. Even then we should not be in the same position of safety that we are now, or in anything approaching to it. The soil of France has been again and again successfully invaded during the many years in which our seas have been really "inviolate." The soil of Britain presents, as long as her surrounding seas are not pierced, difficulties to invasion such as exist for no other great country in the world.

The want of seriousness with which the question is discussed cannot be better illustrated than by Sir Wilfrid Lawson's silly, if not criminal, joke, "Why should not we invade France?" Invade France! We who maintain in Britain only a depot army for India! We who are the only country in Europe the citizens of which make no personal sacrifices for military strength and military security!

The great danger to us of a Channel tunnel is that

if once our end of it were seized, as unquestionably it might be, whatever securities we take, by surprise, and by some of the commonest ruses known to war, that then through the tunnel might pour troops as fast as trains could carry them. Any numbers that were necessary out of the whole vast army of France might be passed in perfect security to deal with the little force which we keep up for purposes altogether other than those for which the French army is maintained. No army could have behind it a more secure line of communication with its own country. The German army advancing upon Paris was liable to be assailed along the whole line on which its supplies of food and munitions of war were travelling. The French army would have, at all events as far as Dover, the means of passing whatever fresh troops or supplies it required, without any chance of their being touched in any way.

The madness that is involved in the proposal to introduce into our peaceful country such an element of danger is such that one hardly knows how to meet it as if it were seriously made. In all future discussions I purpose to assume that we have not to deal with this risk. I shall assume that, at all events, any army engaged in invading Britain has first to effect a landing on her shores, with liability, though no certainty, that it may have its attempt interrupted by our fleet, and, if it has effected a landing, that it may have its retreat cut off.

As I am only engaged in this chapter in considering the different possible modes of attack upon the country, I pass on now to the dangers which threaten other parts of the Empire.

Among these the first place is necessarily taken by

India. That subject has recently been elaborately discussed in the volume by Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, of which a new edition reaches me as these words go to press. It has the defect I ventured to point out in regard to the earlier edition, that it ignores the evidence supplied by Sir A. Haliburton's report. No discussion in regard to our present system can be of much value which does not deal with that evidence. I purpose here to set forth certain general principles which seem to me necessary to be taken into account before their very valuable statement of the condition of the frontier of the Indian Empire can be treated as a practical estimate of our right course in war.

That it is from Russia that we are there liable to attack, just as at home it is from France only that we have any serious reason to anticipate any possible attempt at invasion, scarcely needs to be said. To me it seems now, as it has seemed for years, that what we have to dread from Russia is not so much an immediate invasion of India, as the fact that she is still so remote from India, for purposes of effective action on our part, that she is able continually to make advances which tend very much to increase for her the facilities of ultimate invasion of India, while it is exceedingly difficult for us to interfere with them.

If, for instance, Russia were to choose to seize some of the provinces of Afghanistan beyond the Hindoo Koosh, or were to make up her mind to occupy Herat, it is practically certain that she could do one or the other under the present condition of things before we could interfere with her. Suppose that she did either one or the other, and remained, without further

aggression, in tranquil possession of them, we should be, under present circumstances, placed in a position of the very greatest difficulty.

We have given such pledges to the Ameer that we could not, without violation of the honour of our Government, refuse to assist the Ameer if he called upon us to aid him in recovering them. In a military sense that would involve us in a campaign, not only in itself arduous, but such that we should put ourselves at a great disadvantage as compared with Russia. The march of our troops, all reinforcements for them, their connection with India, and the supplies of food and ammunition that they would require, must run through most difficult country, in which a few hostile tribes acting against them might place us in an awkward position, if not in imminent danger. The mere fact that we entered as allies of the Ameer would not at all secure us against the predatory instincts of banditti nominally under his rule. Any disaster, almost any rumour of disaster, that happened to our troops, in the distant province which we should have to enter in order to fulfil our pledges, would certainly cause the most fierce attacks upon our lines of communication, and make the efficient maintenance of the force at the front a task extraordinarily hard.

Nor can I see what security we should have, even after we had expelled the Russians, that as soon as we went home again they would not immediately re-enter into possession. The occupation of Cabul and Candahar, which is talked of as the necessary consequence of any such action on the part of Russia, would surely not satisfy the Ameer as a fulfilment of our pledge to

defend his territory whether beyond the Hindoo Koosh or otherwise.

Yet the alternative is a most difficult one. If we violate our pledges to the Ameer, not only shall we make him a tool in the hands of Russia, but we shall shake all confidence in our word throughout the East. We shall manifestly have promised to do that which we were not able to do, and have recoiled because of sheer impotence. Furthermore, though perhaps our interest in the territory beyond the Hindoo Koosh is small, on any other ground than that of our pledge to the Ameer, our interest in Herat is very large. In its present condition Herat is probably of little importance to anybody. Developed as it might easily be, and almost certainly would be, for military purposes under Russian rule, it would become, what it always used to be in former ages, the gate of India.

The practical meaning of that figurative phrase is easily explained. The first necessity that has to be secured for Russian action anywhere, but more especially on the confines of India and throughout Asia, is facility of movement and of transport. It is obviously not enough that there should be, somewhere or other, under the command of the Czar untold millions of soldiers. In order that they may effect anything on the confines of India, those that are to fight must be near enough to shoot, and have with them both the means of shooting and the means of living. At very great sacrifice the Russians have carried their railway from the Caspian along the northern frontiers of Persia and of Afghanistan. But the railway is necessarily one along which the transport is slow, and it offers no facilities for the further

movement across Afghanistan upon India. If Herat were in the hands of Russia and its military resources fully developed, most of the implements of warfare could be constructed within the province itself. Large supplies of food also for an army could be grown there, and in the settled province large stores also of such things as an army would require, such as could not be procured in the place, could be gradually accumulated. When the process was complete, the change in the situation would in fact be that a Russian army would have to advance either upon Afghanistan, or upon India, from Herat, and would draw all its supplies from it. All the difficulties of the long transport across the Caspian by the narrow-gauge railway, and thence over the roads where there is at present no railway, would be overcome. The position of advantage in which Russia would stand under these circumstances, must, I think, be intelligible to any one even if he has very little considered the nature of military operations.

To sum up, therefore, the case, as it appears to me, stands thus. Supposing that Russia carries on consistently the policy that she has been following for years, she, being nearer both to Herat and the provinces north of the Hindoo Koosh than we are, can occupy them whenever she is not afraid of a general war with us. We could only turn her out of them at very great cost, with very great difficulty, and with very great risk. To me, therefore, it seems, as it has always seemed, that our true policy is to prevent her from making this attack upon us by taking advantage of the general political situation of Europe. How that can best be done, it will be the object of a future chapter to show. My present

purpose is to indicate the fact that the form of attack which we have most to dread from Russia on our Indian frontier is not an immediate invasion of our Indian provinces, but such a gradual advance into positions of future advantage for her, as it will be exceedingly difficult for us to stop by direct action in India.

In two other quarters, other than in Afghanistan, there is menace of this danger. The recent advance of Russia into the Pamirs has attracted much attention; her stealthy inroads upon Persia comparatively little. Nevertheless, I am myself inclined to think that the Persian question is much the more serious of the two. A few years ago, when Baker Pasha and Sir Charles MacGregor visited the northern frontier of Persia, it was still possible to make a serious impression from that side upon the line of communication of Russia between Merve and the Caspian.

But Russia has been steadily guarding herself against that danger, and, taking advantage of the feebleness of Persia, has established herself in such a way that practically the opportunity for us is closed. We now, at Chitral, watch the approach from the Pamirs, and on that side, considering the nature of the region, do not seem to have much to fear.

Our various Colonies are most of them exposed to certain risks of their own. A few years ago Russia had designed an attack upon the Australian Colonies from her Pacific harbour of Vladivostock. It was intended that a fleet should sail upon the then open towns of Australia, harass them, and exact fines from them. The wisest advisers of the Colonies have of late years been anxious to restrain them from expending too much

money upon defensive works. The defence of a great island like Australia must depend primarily upon the efficiency of the fleet, and secondly upon the careful organisation of the defensive forces on land. For a time the effect of the certainty of Russia's intention was to infuse such a vigour into the system of Australian defence that all danger of any such attempt seemed to have passed away. But there is always risk lest a democratic community shall go to sleep as soon as the immediate alarm has passed, and wake when it is too late.[1]

There is a special form of attack which may be directed against those possessions of England beyond seas, which are, to say the least, less important as colonies than as outlying posts for the protection of the commerce of the mother-country, and of the Empire at large. This expression applies more particularly to our fortified coaling-stations. These have now so far advanced that it is to be hoped that before we are involved in war they will be completed, armed, and garrisoned so far as to fulfil the purpose for which they were intended. That purpose will be understood when I have explained the form of attack which a few years ago we had to dread. It was one directed expressly against the supplies of coal on which alike our fleet and our commerce depend for possibility of movement.

[1] I must draw attention to a volume on the *Federal Defence of Australasia*, by George Cathcart Craig (William Clowes and Son, 1897). It reaches me too late for notice here, but it admirably shows that there are Australians who are determined that our great Australasian colonies shall not sleep tranquilly in imaginary security, or foolishly dream that separation from Britain would make them safer or freer.

The fear which was felt by those who looked into the circumstances of any future naval warfare, was lest an enemy's cruiser might go into one of our unarmed coaling-stations, fill up her bunkers with coal, and, after setting fire to the remaining store in the place, proceed at her leisure to destroy commerce, having protected herself from pursuit by the destruction of the coal. She might then repeat the same operation at one coaling-station after another. Admiral Colomb has devoted much labour and skill to the demonstration of the fact that the elaborate fortification of harbours is a wasteful expenditure. He has shown that the question of supremacy at sea must necessarily be determined, not by land fortifications, but by naval superiority. These views have so far ruled in the construction of our coaling-station defences, that no attempt has been made to make them strong enough to resist the attack of a formidable fleet. No one more fully than Admiral Colomb himself recognises the importance of those steps that we have actually taken to secure our supply of coal from the attack of ubiquitous cruisers.

The subject gained additional interest by the publication in Russia, some years since, of the little brochure, *Russia's Hope*, which was based upon this very idea, evidently stolen from some of our English authors, probably from my friend Colonel Home, at the time when, many years ago, he and others[1] were pressing for the defence of the coaling-stations. *Russia's Hope*

[1] Ultimately most vigorously of all Mr. W. H. Smith and Lord Carnarvon. See the excellent collection of Lord Carnarvon's speeches and letters on the subject, recently edited by Sir George Clarke, *The Defence of the Empire* (John Murray, 1897).

would nowadays find that form of attack somewhat difficult. No protection that we have been able to devise, either in the past or the present, unless and until the whole of our enemy's fleets are securely locked up in their own harbours, can prevent an occasionally successful attack by a fleet escorting a land force against some isolated port. Ultimately, however, the fate of any of these will depend upon victory at sea. Beyond their local importance such attacks would have very little effect upon the general security of our commerce, except in so far as by the capture of one of our coaling-stations they broke some one of the great lines of these which have now been regularly laid out along the several courses of the great streams of our commerce at regulated intervals. Thus along the line to the Cape we have St. Helena and Sierra Leone, thence to India, Durban, Mauritius, Colombo, and our other lines are similarly laid out.

The capture of any one of these stations would, of course, interrupt for the time the regular coaling of our ships. That, therefore, is another of the forms of attack against which we have to be prepared.

It is unfortunately the case that there are various stations very necessary for the security of our trade where we are liable to attack from a different enemy, namely, malaria. It is always a question whether we ought not to provide against it, even at some sacrifice of our preparedness against a human foe. It is on this account that there have, till recently, been among our troops at home certain detachments which are noted as belonging to the proper garrison of certain unhealthy stations like Sierra Leone; for the moment of the

outbreak of war these stations would have been left to the guardianship of the fleet. As soon as possible their proper garrisons were to have been sent out to them. As, however, the Admiralty might find it very difficult to secure due protection on the outbreak of war, it has recently been decided to have complete garrisons everywhere.

Similarly St. Lucia is an island of which the importance, from its excellent harbour and convenient situation, makes it most desirable to have as a defended coaling-station; yet it was considered too unhealthy for a permanent garrison to be maintained at its full strength. A large portion of its garrison was therefore to be sent from Barbados when the emergency arose. This, however, has now been changed, and, with such sanitary precautions as are possible, a garrison is now to be kept at St. Lucia.

So far as Canada is concerned, apart from any calamity so terrible as that of a war with our cousins in the States, there is always some danger during time of war of filibustering attempts being made from the United States against various points, and especially against the long line of the Canadian Railway. Sir Charles Dilke, who has studied all such matters very carefully, attaches very great importance to these. Personally, I cannot say that any experience we have had of them in the past leaves that impression upon me. I could, if I pleased, which I certainly do not propose to do, name what I have always considered a weak point in our defensive arrangements on the American Continent. There is a point where a well-handled body of filibusters might achieve a rather startling success.

But I do not think that, as long as the American Government proves as loyal as it has hitherto done in such matters, and as long as Fenian filibusters have so little power of keeping a secret, or of acting loyally towards one another, as they have hitherto shown, there is any serious danger for us of this kind. Canadian statesmen, who necessarily have had to look into the matter more closely than Sir Charles Dilke, have the most complete confidence in the security for all practical purposes of the great trans-continental line.

Though, in order to make myself intelligible, it has been necessary occasionally to allude, especially in regard to minor matters which need only brief treatment, to some points in the nature of the defence which we should have to adopt against certain possible forms of attack, my object in this chapter has been to consider the form of the various attacks which may be directed against the nation in different parts of the world. They may be enumerated thus:—

First of all, attacks upon our commerce by means of cruisers or fleets.

Secondly, an attempt to wrest from us the command of the sea, either permanently or temporarily.

Third, attacks upon open towns along our sea-board.

Fourth, attempted invasion either of this island or of Ireland by sea.

Fifth, if a Channel tunnel should ever be constructed, an attempt to seize, by surprise or otherwise, the means prepared for its destruction and the fortress which guards them.

Sixth, aggressive movements of Russia, preparatory to attack upon India itself.

Seventh, the actual attempt of Russia to invade India.

Eighth, attempts upon our Colonies other than coaling-stations.

Ninth, attempts upon our coaling-stations in the form of a cruiser attack upon the coal without any attempt to seize the station itself.

Tenth, attack by a serious force on a coaling-station with a view to occupy it either permanently or during the period of the war.

Eleventh, a mere predatory raid, such as that intended by Russia from Vladivostock, upon Australia.

Twelfth, filibustering raids from America upon Canada.

In addition to all of these forms of attack, which relate to the possible action of hostile European Powers, there is that which, in its practical effect in necessitating preparation and expenditure, exceeds them all—the danger, on the outlying frontiers of our Empire, of hostile incursions by neighbouring tribes. It constantly happens that British people assume that whenever an Ashantee King or a Zanzibar Sultan defies the power of the British Empire the thing is so absurd that it must be the fault of our own people that he does not yield to reason. They do not realise how one of these chiefs, surrounded by flatterers as ignorant as himself, really believes all the titles that are bestowed on him, as King of Kings, Lord of the Universe, and the like, and has not the slightest means of estimating his own feebleness. Therefore, also, as war and not peace is for him and his people the natural condition, he habitually assumes an attitude of aggression, which is encouraged by the fact that every one who has to carry on negotiations for

Britain—in any matter as to which the British people have not become excited and eager—wants before all things to avoid doing anything that can commit the nation to war. Constantly, in this way, a savage chief is thus tempted, by his own aggressiveness and our passivity, into just overstepping the line of what it is possible for us to tolerate. Then war comes, and half Britain thinks that it is all our fault, and attributes the cause to just the opposite of that to which a fair study of the facts leads.

All these possible forms of attack taken together, provided our Fleet be supreme upon the seas, do not represent a danger as serious as that which menaces Germany or France; but they do represent a necessary dispersion of force, dispersion of design in the nature of the defence, a vast number of independent local authorities in proportion to the number of men employed, and a consequent costliness which cannot but appear to compare unfavourably, no matter what schemes be devised for it, with the larger, the simpler, the more concentrated efforts of foreign countries. I am anxious to emphasise this broad aspect of the case. I wish to do so for this reason: I am convinced that it is a pure and mere delusion, most costly, most mischievous in its effects, to attempt to persuade the British public that they can hold a world-wide empire, hold the commerce of the seas, do it at a *pro rata* proportion of their wealth, utterly insignificant as compared with that which any European Power expends on guarding their own little territory, and then allow themselves to be persuaded that all the time they are being bamboozled into a wasteful and useless expenditure. I say that it is on

these broad lines that one may appeal to the common sense of any rational man to judge for himself.

Sir Charles Dilke once said that directly the attempt is made to go into detail it is extremely difficult for him, or any non-military statesman, seeking for particular items of wasteful expenditure, to answer the case made for them by soldiers. He speaks, in the first instance, as though it were the special interest of individual soldiers to defend extravagance. The fact is that the exact reverse is the case. If I, in any matter under my own responsibility, could detect some means by which the work could be done just a little cheaper than it actually is done, I should be an imbecile of the first water if I did not realise that in my own interest the first thing I had to do was to point this out. So deeply is this impressed on the minds of soldiers that I cannot remember ever to have seen a scheme of reform suggested by a soldier in which it was not proved, to the satisfaction of the writer at all events, that his proposals would lead to some, at least, trifling reduction of expenditure. The soldier in Britain who does not realise that the easiest way to secure his personal advancement is not to make £10,000 produce twice the effective work that it has done before, but to show that the same appearance of efficiency may be kept up for £9999 : 19 : 11¾, simply does not understand British finance. Soldiers may be great fools, but they are not quite so blind as all that.

To put money in his own pocket by securing positions of much greater importance than he at the time holds, this method of seeking out some apparent economy might be commended to any soldier in a suffi-

cient position to practise it. It needs not to be so commended. It is thoroughly understood, and much practised.

There is an even better method, which has stood some men in excellent stead. It consists in proving, on excellent military grounds, that for the sake of efficiency it is highly necessary to carry out some petty military economy. By such methods the individual gains both in credit and pocket. It is the nation only that suffers.

The officer, therefore, who points out, on grounds that all men can understand, that it is not advisable to be perpetually recasting your whole system—because it can be shown that Germany or that France is able, for the same sum of money that we expend, to turn out an incomparably larger body of men than we do—ought not to have his argument suspected or rejected on *prima facie* grounds, because from his position he is necessarily suspected. The balance of presumption is altogether the other way.

It is not in this chapter that I can fully state the conclusions to which these remarks lead; but, in making out a statement of the variety of the attacks to which the world-wide extent of our empire on sea and land lays us open, it seems well to draw attention at once to the broad presumption to which they lead. It is in no wise my intention to contend in this chapter that our system admits of no improvement, and that no waste occurs. For many reasons much waste occurs, and ought to be remedied; but the comparison often made with the armies of foreign Powers is an altogether fallacious one, and tends not to economy, but to mischief.

CHAPTER IV

HOW DO WE DEFEND THE EMPIRE?—OUR PRESENT SYSTEM AND METHOD OF RECRUITMENT, ETC.

THE first broad contrast that strikes all foreign nations between the nature of defensive measures in Britain and those that any of them adopt, is the fact that our Navy and Army alike depend on a system of voluntary enlistment.

The one other great naval Power of Europe, France, has a system by which she compulsorily utilises for her navy the whole of her maritime population. Nor, it must be admitted, have we ever carried out a great war in which we have not adopted compulsory methods, of a very rough and brutal kind, for filling our ships of war. Whether, if we are ever engaged again in a life and death struggle, the system of voluntary service would adequately fill up the Navy it is impossible to say. What is certain is, that we have no experience of a successful attempt of the kind to guide us. It is a very serious question for several reasons, first, because, according to the view taken by many of our ablest sailors, our merchant seamen are no longer adapted in any case to become the supply for our ships of war, if we were ever so drastically to take them, the conditions required on

a man-of-war being nowadays so much more different from those on a merchant ship than was the case in the days of Nelson. Secondly, the numbers of our British sailors of the mercantile marine have appallingly diminished. Admiral Sir Vesey Hamilton calculates[1] that whereas in 1873 we had 133,631 mercantile sailors, in 1893 there were only 55,000, the remaining 170,000 being foreigners of almost every nationality. Thus, for the manning of the Navy in time of war, we require not only enough men to furnish crews for all the ships we commission, but a sufficient number to replace the men whom in former wars we drew from the mercantile marine. There is only one practically unlimited source of supply —the boys gathered on our various training-ships. Any one who is familiar with the working of such a splendid charity as that which provides the *Warspite*, for instance, cannot but think that if the funds of that Society could be multiplied twenty-fold, it would be one of the most splendid forms which the memorial of our Sea-Queen's reign could take. It would relieve our streets of undisciplined young bears, and would turn them into the most valuable servants of the country. They are only keen to go. They thoroughly enjoy their life on board, and improve under it in all respects amazingly, physically as well as morally. Any millionaire who would provide the funds for one ship, to be specially called after him, would leave a memorial of himself, and contribute a service alike to patriotism, philanthropy, and national defence, such as hardly any other could equal.

The contrast, however, which the war condition of Britain presents to that of foreign Powers lies also in

[1] In an article in the *United Service Magazine*.

the circumstances under which their land forces and ours are enrolled. On that subject it is necessary to say a few words to explain a point which appears to be curiously misunderstood by most British popular writers. Conscription, as that term is understood by them, is a thing of the past. The armies of the Continent are no longer filled in the old sense of the term by the unfortunate men who have drawn unlucky numbers in a conscription. On the contrary, in France it is only the physically unfit, or those who for some motive of advantage to the State are exempt, who do not receive a military training and are not liable to be called into the army in time of war. This applies to all trades, professions, classes, and orders in the State.

In Germany, from motives of economy, a certain proportion of the men liable for service are at present not actually taken into the ranks. They are, however, kept as a reserve, always liable to be called upon. They receive only a limited amount of training, unless they are summoned to enter the army. This they may, quite apart from any option of their own, be called upon to do at any moment.

It is excessively difficult to bring home to Englishmen, living under such entirely different conditions as they do, the extent to which this system permeates all the relations of life, and influences the whole question of national defence in innumerable ways. The notion that it only affects the Budget because of the difference of pay between the British soldier, the Frenchman, or the German, is the most complete delusion.

I have said elsewhere[1] that the whole situation can

[1] In *Hostilities without Declaration of War.*

hardly otherwise be summed up than by the statement that Britain and America are the only two great countries in which, properly speaking, peace "reigns." Everywhere on the Continent, though peace is maintained, it is war that reigns. All the conditions of life are based on the assumption that the first business of a country is to be ready to defend itself, or rather to maintain its armed forces in the most efficient condition, whether for offence or defence. The individual subject or citizen of a state has not to be induced, by any consideration for his comfort or convenience, to enter the army. Therefore no expense need be incurred such as, altogether apart from the question of pay, we have of late years been continually incurring for the increase of the comfort of the soldier.

Among the most costly services that we have in the British Army is the Medical Service in all its departments. We have to provide medical officers in a country where the ablest doctors can command almost any fees that they please. We have to provide a Veterinary Service in a country of wealthy horse masters, where a good veterinary surgeon is a man who has a highly profitable position. Neither Germany nor France has to reckon upon any such expenditure as is involved in competition with the professions. They simply call to the ranks of the army in war time enough of the ablest medical men and veterinary surgeons in the country, who are very glad to be employed upon their own proper work, and not upon the duties of the private soldier.

The continual pressure of philanthropists and of Members of Parliament, zealous for the good of the

private soldier, in various ways entails expenditure for which there is no occasion in armies in which the service is exceedingly brief and where the army has to enter into no competition with general trade. We ask, nevertheless, from the soldiers whom we enlist by such inducements as we offer, an abandonment of all home ties, and a change of life such as no Continental country demands. More than half our army is always in India and in the Colonies. On the Continent the private soldier is rarely far from his home, and never out of his native country.

Without entering into details that would not be suitable to a work of this kind, it is not difficult to understand that the supply of armament and equipment, not only to India but to our numerous stations dotted over the world, Aden, Gibraltar, Malta, Halifax (Nova Scotia), Bermuda, Hong Kong, the Cape, Sierra Leone, St. Helena, and the rest, and the interchange of men between those stations and home, represent conditions altogether other than those of the maintenance of a home fortress with a large garrison like Metz or Strasbourg.

Take another point. Among the most remarkable features of our commercial life in England of late years has been the gradual disappearance of small shopkeepers, and the substitution for them of great organisations such as those of Whiteley, the other large shops, and, notably, the various co-operative stores. The reason why the small shopkeeper has not been able to hold his own is, clearly enough, that it is relatively very much more economical to manage a very large business than a small one. The small shopkeeper, if he is to compete success-

fully, must employ a knowledge and a talent, for which the profits of his business offer no adequate reward. If he possesses the needed talent, the larger organisation can offer him far better payment than he can secure for himself. If he does not possess it he is rapidly ruined. Those who best know the back slums of London tell you that many of the worst of them are peopled with unfortunate men and women who have tried to manage small shops.

Now we, relatively to France or Germany, are like the owners of a large number of small shops. The garrison of Metz, concentrated in one spot, consists of a number of men not much less than is spread over the whole of our different fortified coaling-stations, properly so called, and our smaller possessions abroad. The commandant of that garrison requires to be a carefully selected man of large military knowledge and capacity. But in close daily communication as he is with the Home Government, it is impossible that he should have to decide on his own motion questions as difficult as must continually come before the commanding officer of the troops at Hong Kong, or as may present themselves at any moment to the commandant of troops in Mauritius, at the Cape, at Halifax, Nova Scotia, or in most of our other stations. A mistake on the part of one of our local commanders, or of their staffs, may at any moment involve Britain in war or costly expenditure. These places are so far like the small shop, that the small number of men that we have under the orders of the commander at the station, must have at their head a man of at least as large capacity, and supplied with as adequate a staff as the commandant at Metz, or else

the failure of the small business as compared with the larger will be as conspicuous as it is in the case of the small shops. Yet in relation, not to the number of the troops but to the property and interests involved in their right management, these places are not like small shops, but like very large ones indeed. They are small only because we are able to employ insignificant numbers to do work such as would by a foreign country be undertaken by very large military forces. We are able to do this because these stations are after all only the outposts of an empire, the great "territory" of which, if one may venture on a contradictory expression, alone adequate to convey the peculiar nature of our dominion, is the sea. It is our dominion over the sea which makes it possible for us, not without often incurring great risks, and not without occasional disasters, to employ on our expeditions beyond sea, and in our maintenance of our territories beyond the seas, forces the numerical inferiority of which habitually excites the astonishment, it is hardly too much to say the reproach, for our folly, of all the great military powers. Take a case which not long since occurred in Egypt. We were threatened, or supposed to be threatened, by the revolt of a nation, perhaps of an army, which has, within the memory of our generation, shaken to its foundations the Turkish Empire. We have, not unsuccessfully, attempted to restore to its ancient power and prestige that army, equipped as it is with batteries of artillery which we have ourselves organised and trained. There is no other nation which, thus threatened, would meet the difficulty, as we met it three years ago, by supplying to our insignificant garrison six guns of the Royal Artillery. Any

other nation would have thought that it was absolutely necessary to keep guns there previous to the emergency.

Far be it from me to blame these bold methods by which we retain our hold on such a dominion as the world has never seen. They are most economical and wisely economical methods by which we employ only a representative force that may be strengthened at our pleasure, as and when we require it. But there is one economy that is not wise but mad; it is that which would compare the duties which are thrown upon the rulers of these isolated posts with the functions of the brigadier of an equal number of troops under the orders of a divisional commander, himself under the daily orders of a corps commander, who receives his orders from the commandant of Metz, who is himself under the orders of the governor of Elsass-Lothringen, and in close communication with headquarters at Berlin.

Is it credible that not one word of this comparison between the circumstances of the cost of our Army and the cost of the same number of German soldiers appears in any of the evidence that was given before the Committee appointed by the House of Commons specially to inquire into that matter? It was not that there were not men who gave evidence before it who thoroughly understood these questions; it was that the Committee itself so conducted its inquiry as not to admit of such evidence coming before it. Is it credible that an able statesman like Sir Charles Dilke, who has travelled to almost all the stations that I speak of, and knows well the nature of the questions that must come before a governor who has to rely for military advice upon the commandant of the troops, omits all estimate of the

duties that are thrown upon the staff, let us say of the commandant of the troops at the Cape, and treats the numbers of our own Army and the numbers of the German as the one standard by which we are to judge of the economy with which the work that has to be performed is carried out by the German Army and by our own?

For my own part I have for years believed that the danger of extravagance and of injury which threatens our services comes from an altogether different quarter. I have often been tempted to exhibit the nature of that danger with full details such as it would not be very difficult to procure. I know already the most important facts. The title I should choose would be "The Denudation of the Services." My own observation and that of others, better placed than I am to observe, has led me to the conclusion that a process is at present going on, and is likely to go on faster in the future than it does now, by which the enormous temptations that are offered to able men in private life, tend gradually to deprive us in the service of the State of most of the able young men who enter it, long before they have attained to positions where their ability can be of much value to the nation. Every year it is more and more difficult for members of the House of Commons to vote pay for the servants of the State such as will retain competent men. Many of their constituents share the feeling of the agitator who said that he had never known the man whose services were worth £600 a year.

A comic scene, which took place a few years ago in the House, admirably illustrates the feeling of certain members. Mr. Labouchere, with his tongue in his

cheek, as his manner is, had announced, *à propos* of some vote of money to a successful general, that the man who made two blades of grass grow where one had grown before was better worth rewarding than all the generals that ever commanded in the world. So far as Mr. Labouchere was concerned, he, if reports be true, made no secret afterwards of the fact that it was an elaborate joke. But his words were received with rapturous applause by a certain section of the House of Commons. I suppose, from some experience in that matter, that the cost of making two blades of grass grow where one had grown before, seeing that that result is to be secured by a trifling expenditure on manure, would be ludicrously over-estimated by allowing, say the Duke of Wellington's "twopenny dam" for it. The only objection to offering that kind of payment to a general is that if you succeeded in getting him at the price, his blunders would probably cost you many millions. It is not he who has to be considered in the matter, but you.

If you choose to allow all work done for you at a risk of life, and sacrifice of health, and sleepless nights and laborious days to be treated with this kind of insolence, you will get your reward, and it will be a pretty smart one. How long would the Canadian Pacific Railway manage to maintain its present prosperity if Mr. Van Horne's salary were cut down to the highest payment that is even now made to any of our generals?

Obviously it is not the rich but the poor who are cut out of employment, when you pay salaries that do not even cover the expense of the appointments for which they are given. It is on that account that our great private enterprises find it profitable to pay the

high salaries that they do. To be limited in your choice of men by having to select only those who are independent of your payment, means in the long run that you cannot secure competent work. But if that tells in private life, where men can be selected from any source, it tells tenfold more in the working of great organisations, when you are limited in your choice to those who have remained in your service; because, long before you are able to make your selection for high command, those who have seen their way to more profitable employment elsewhere will have abandoned the service which offers no prospects. That might not have been the case in days when the public service was held in the highest honour, but the efforts of those who object to paying adequately for good work are directed at the same time to degrade and dishonour it. Among the comparisons that are made, as a proof of the extravagance of our system, is that with the much lower payments made in Germany. In Germany the payment is made in honour. The service of the State is the one honourable calling. On the Continent no soldier is required to secure honour by expenditure. The State undertakes for its Von Moltke all the expenses of entertainment that we should of course throw on him himself. How can you then compare a salary paid to a German chief of the staff for his own living with the money you pay to those who must, in order to do your work, expend many hundreds, in some cases many thousands, more than you give them?

Of course there are enormous advantages in the condition of a free kingdom where the State is not the only master whose service is honourable, and where

private enterprise leads as surely to public esteem as does any work done directly for the State. But, in estimating the advantages by which you secure good service, it is idle to ignore the difference which this condition of things produces.

What I have said about these matters at home[1] and in our small colonies applies with tenfold force to India. The enormous reduction in the salaries of all officials, civil and military, which has taken place there of late years in consequence of the fall in value of the rupee, is nothing short of a national danger. Whilst there are those who have persuaded the working men that we maintain our rule in India for the sake of providing convenient places and large stipends for the sons of aristocratic English families, those who know India best can hardly speak unmoved of the terrible position of hundreds of families who can barely keep soul and body together or avoid finding themselves plunged into debt, whilst they are still struggling to do their duty with the same integrity as of old. When a tradition of honour has been established for generations in a great profession, it is happily many years before causes which tend to its deterioration operate with effective force. But when once the decline has begun, it is as difficult to avert its progress as it is easy to maintain the high standard after it has been long established.

When Clive undertook the reform of the Civil Service of India, hardly any could have been more corrupt. It is difficult to exaggerate the danger to our Indian Empire

[1] Those who know our Civil Service tell me that in certain departments "denudation" goes on at a rapid rate.

of the recurrence of a state of things from which he then delivered it.

I have been careful to discuss first these questions of the causes which affect the personnel of the higher administration of our national defence, because I have a rooted disbelief in the truth of the phrase, which is always the solution of all difficulties, "It is the system that is at fault." For my own part, I believe that if you get the right men, they will make any system work, and will in time create the system that suits the best men. If you get the wrong men, no system will work in their hands, and in time they will beget a system that suits only the worst men. A system, in fact, is valuable or not, in proportion as it tends to give you good men.

It is, however, now time to pass to an examination of the actual methods by which the land forces are provided for the Empire. There are points in regard to our expenditure compared with other nations which cannot be discussed till that has been explained, and I must recur to the subject. When the victories of Prussia in Europe forced attention to the means by which she had succeeded in developing at relatively small cost enormous armies, the question was naturally forced upon us, how far we could take advantage of similar methods.

Our position at the time was this. The old standing Army without reserves, which had come down to us from the days of Wellington, had not, in its existing form, a very long history. Ever since the Restoration regiments had been raised as they were required for successive wars; the reductions which had followed on the conclusion of peace had practically broken up the

army which had carried on the war. After the great peace in 1815, very large reductions had again been made. The Duke of Wellington had endeavoured to avoid these being carried beyond a point which he deemed would be dangerous for the safety of the country, by burying the army out of sight. For this purpose it had been scattered in small detachments in different parts of the kingdom. All the organisation of the brigades and divisions, which had made it so effective during the Peninsular War, had been broken up. It had become merely a number of battalions, with a very small force of artillery reduced to almost complete inefficiency, and a very few cavalry regiments.

The camp at Chobham, shortly before the Crimean War, was the first attempt to gather together any larger nucleus of troops.

Under these circumstances, no one having paid the least attention to any general question of the recruitment of the Army for war, it cannot be said that there was any method based upon careful investigation, which connected the troops that were maintained during peace time with the creation of an army such as would be required for war.

It was inevitable that the system should break down, as it did completely in the Crimean War. Nevertheless the great efforts that were made during that campaign, and subsequently for the suppression of the Indian mutinies, did provide a very fine body of troops, who, as they stood on parade in Britain, deservedly impressed onlookers with an appearance of efficiency.

When, however, reference is made now to some period antecedent to our present condition of service,

when "the good old Army" stood in its stalwart ranks on parade, it is well to remember how very short that period was. It can hardly be said to have much preceded 1860, by which time most of the regiments had returned from India and the Chinese expedition. From 1860 to 1870 is certainly not a very long period to look back to as that of the "fine old Army." Presumably nobody would wish to restore the condition of things which existed prior to the Crimean War, when it was with difficulty that sufficient horsed and equipped guns could be provided to attend the Duke of Wellington's funeral.

But what was in fact the condition of that "good old long-service Army," which during the ten short years of its existence from 1860–70 established such a hold upon the imagination of the British public that it is looked back to now as if it were the Army which won for us all our great campaigns? It is summed up in the report of the Royal Commission on recruiting of 1866:—"In fact it may be said that we were content to exist from hand to mouth with no forecast of the future. No preparations for a state of war were thought of. . . . Men were enrolled and sent half-trained into the field." "Its present strength is barely sufficient for a period of peace, and the question is how we can most readily and speedily increase it through the means of a reserve of men who have already received their training in its ranks, but may have fallen back . . . into civil life." This Commission had been called on to report avowedly because of "the great difficulty which was experienced in procuring recruits for the Army, and in point of fact the question" was "whether the British Army should be allowed to collapse."

In other words, the long-service system of recruitment had completely broken down, not only as a means of providing any enlargement for the Army in time of war, but even as a means of keeping up the ordinary establishment without any other forces behind it.

The attempt was made in 1866–67 to stimulate recruitment by increasing the pay and allowances of the soldier, whilst still retaining a long-service system. It completely failed.

It was under these circumstances that the whole question was reconsidered between 1870 and 1873, and that from about 1870 the so-called short-service system was adopted. In other words, during the whole period of the existence of the good old long-service Army, it was in a condition of suspended animation. It looked very pretty to spectators at a review at Aldershot to see fine, stalwart, well-drilled men marching past in such numbers as could be procured; it was very pleasant for regimental officers during peace time to have to deal with well-trained men, who did them great credit with little trouble; but the moment the slightest incident occurred, such as an army, it may be supposed, exists to meet, no one complained more bitterly of what then happened than the men who most admired a good old long-service soldier.

Captain Mercer, in his history of the Waterloo campaign, has described how three other batteries had to be broken up in order to enable the one with which he served to take the field. During the Crimean War regiments were first denuded of their best men in order to fill up battalions which had gone on service, and then were themselves sent to serve in the field with their

ranks newly filled up. If the system as it then existed could be judged by the decision of regimental officers at the moment when their batteries or battalions were broken up, it is tolerably safe to say that its condemnation by them would have been complete and bitter. Unfortunately, during periods of peace time, it is apt to be forgotten that an army is an instrument for war, and not for peace; that its condition during peace time, so far as appearance and even warlike quality are concerned, does not matter in the slightest degree, except in so far as that condition tends to determine its readiness for war.

In any case, because of the complete failure of the old system, the short-service system was introduced about 1870. The broad principles on which this system was based were briefly these. The time that it takes to train a soldier for war, if he be properly kept at work during the whole time, is about three years. After that he becomes an exceedingly convenient man in saving trouble to those who have to train him. He, if he is fit to be a soldier at all, looks very smart on parade, and requires very little attention. Therefore it is an immense convenience for those who want their battalions, as every good commanding officer does, to look smart on parade, to have hardly any men in the ranks who are not of less than this standing. But obviously from the time that the man is trained there is a waste of training power. The work of officers and non-commissioned officers is greatly reduced, but then from the point of view of getting the most for the money of the country it is much more economical to put the training power we possess to work on new men. In

Germany originally, and now in both France and Austria, this principle is applied in pretty much this form, except that both in France and Germany the term is now generally reduced to about two years. Our conditions are different, and obviously we must modify our system accordingly. We cannot afford to send out to India, where we necessarily maintain so much of our army, men for only two years. Therefore we have applied to the Guards alone the three-years system, and that in a modified way. As the Guards do not go out to India except for war, they can pass their men into a reserve as soon as they are trained. As, however, with voluntary enlistment, it is well to give men the option of serving for such terms as will best suit them, and as it is also well with a *corps d'élite* intended to be a solid nucleus for great emergencies to have a certain number of old soldiers permanently in the ranks, we in the Guards offer to any men who wish to do so the option of serving on for seven years. A certain number serve thus for three, and the remainder for seven years before passing into the Reserve. The only danger in such a relaxation of the system lies in this, that regimental officers naturally look to the object immediately before them, and prefer to keep their men for seven rather than for three years, greatly to the improvement of the appearance of the battalion on parade, but to the detriment of the formation of the Reserve on which they depend for increasing their strength for war. It is a danger in this respect, that regimental pressure is apt to be brought to bear to induce a man to extend his service from three to seven years. A man under some commanding officers who do not like the system is treated as

a "good" soldier and given every sort of indulgence if he will extend his service, and as a "bad" soldier if he intends to take his discharge at the end of three years. Nevertheless, under the system the Guards' recruiting has so enormously improved that it has been necessary repeatedly to raise the standard in order to put a check on the numbers who wish to enlist. Moreover, a most satisfactory Reserve has been formed.

As regards the remainder of the infantry, however, we are obliged to adapt our system to the fact that we must keep the Army abroad in a high state of efficiency, and that we cannot relieve it on a simple three-years system. We therefore for the line enlist for seven years. Moreover, the plan was devised of linking two battalions together, so that one at home should receive recruits from the depot, and send out to India and the Colonies such drafts as the battalion abroad each year required. It has made the Indian Army more efficient than it has been in the whole course of our history before. It has given us a force additional to those with the colours of nearly 80,000 men, which we never had before under any other system. As a necessary consequence, however, it has made the battalions which appear on a parade or at a review from which these men have been subtracted during peace time much younger than was the case with the old long-service battalions, which stood on parade just as they would have had to go to war. Those battalions had nothing behind them; these have.

During the reign of the long-service system, whenever it was necessary to stimulate recruiting, very large bounties were given to tempt men to enlist. Under the

short-service system bounties have been abolished. Nevertheless, so popular with the class that enlists is "short service" as compared with long, that with all its bounties "long service," during the ten years of its existence as a regularly-established peace system, maintained for the purposes of possible war, only induced an average of 15,084 men to enter the ranks each year. The short-service system, without any bounties, draws to the ranks annually an average of 31,537.

Two conditions, however, were essential to the effective maintenance of this method. One, that the cadres for the training of this large number of recruits should be strong; the other, that the number of battalions at home should be at least equal to those abroad. It was necessary that there should be good non-commissioned officers for the training of the young soldiers. It was necessary also that the great strain thrown upon the home battalions in supplying men for service abroad should not be made unendurable by throwing upon any particular battalion more than its fair share of the work.

Here comes in one of the peculiar conditions of our great Empire in tropical climes, that we are obliged to send to India, not youths of the age at which we enlist them, but matured men. Here also comes in one of the peculiarities of our system of voluntary enlistment, that we are obliged to take recruits at the age when recruits are most willing to come to us. If we attempted to enlist at the age of a matured man, we should put ourselves into direct competition with the ordinary trades of the country. We should then have to pay, not such a sum as will be attractive to youths who have not made up their minds as to their career, boys who are often much

inclined to the soldier's business, but we should have to tempt out of the careers which they have already taken up, men who have practically settled in life.

This has always been the case. All evidence goes to show that, so far as the age of recruits at enlistment is concerned, it was precisely the same under the long-service system as under the present one. Thus in 1861 evidence was given that a great number of lads of sixteen, and even of fifteen, were enlisted. In 1866 Lord William Paulet, the then Adjutant-General, said, "I daresay that not one-half of them are above sixteen." Other conditions, however, tend largely now to increase the proportion of the recruits in the home battalions. We enlist twice as many recruits as formerly. In 1861 we sent out to India some boys not more than sixteen, and the bulk under twenty. We now endeavour at least to send only those men who are carefully certified by a doctor as being presumably twenty years of age. The effect of this, which has nothing to do with short service as such, is to leave in the home battalions a much larger number of recruits than was formerly the case. For war purposes, however, this is a far less important matter than it was under former conditions. We have now over 80,000 trained soldiers of the Army Reserve and 30,000 of the Militia Reserve, altogether exclusive of the men we have in the ranks of the Army.

A complaint has been made by some modern assailants of our present system that the term "Reserve" thus applied is a misnomer. They say that the Reserve will be required to fill up the ranks of the Army immediately on war being declared, and that therefore it is not a

reserve for war at all. It does not represent a force remaining in the country available to replenish the armies in the field during the progress of a war.

It is quite true that the greater part, if not the whole, of the Reserve will be required to fill up the ranks of the Army, and that the particular men who now form the "Reserve" will therefore not be available for further reinforcements. But we shall have drafted into the depots to replace them many of the men who are at present in the ranks—those at least of them who are not of sufficient age for service in the field. The contrast which this presents to the condition in which we have stood at any previous time at the opening of a war is enormously in our favour. The men at present in the ranks are no younger, but, by the length of time that they have been enlisted, so much older than the recruits that we obtained raw from the plough for the purposes of the Crimean War. They have undergone a considerable amount of valuable training, while the reserve men themselves are in the very flower of their age, and have undergone much more training than the men of any European army. On the whole, therefore, taking into account the fact that the Indian Army is kept up at a standard of efficiency such as we have never approached before, and remembering further that under the long-service system the Army was many thousands below its establishment, it is not unfair to say that, supposing that we are able to ensure the services of the reserve men, the new system has added 100,000 available men to our war strength, and that at a very small increase of expenditure.

In two ways the system is essentially economical in its working, and especially adapted to our needs in

endeavouring to get the most we can out of a voluntary system. In the first place, after a man has been thoroughly trained we do not keep him in pay longer than our foreign service requires. We, so to say, bottle him, and turn on our training power to make another man efficient in his place. Secondly, the flow of recruits is apt to be a very uncertain one. Sometimes large numbers of men wish to enlist. At other times there is great slackness in the recruiting. When we are endeavouring to get the Army up to a standard of strength which we have not attained, it is obviously undesirable to be obliged to refuse, because the numbers voted have been reached, recruits who are willing to be enlisted. Under the old system it was impossible to adapt our conditions to these needs. At present, by passing a few more men into the Reserve, we can often make room for recruits as they are ready to offer themselves.[1]

The great doubt which seems to affect men's appreciation of the value of the scheme is the idea that the Reserve is only a paper force which would not be available in time of need. It does not appear to be understood that a man is not counted as available merely because he has passed through the ranks and been transferred to the Reserve; but that only those men are reckoned who have actually appeared for pay at one of the last two quarterly payments. If a man for two quarters omits to report himself, he is struck off the list. We have had to call out the Reserve on two occasions

[1] This applies at present to the Infantry only. As regards the Artillery, the difficulty caused by the check to recruiting every year is most serious. Moreover, as to another point see p. 126.

either altogether or in part, viz. in 1878 and in 1882. On both occasions the men came in most satisfactorily. We have therefore no reason to suppose that they would fail us, but, on the contrary, every reason to believe that they would come in in full strength.

As to the objection made to the term "Reserve," the answer is that the name arose in the most natural way possible. We were adapting to our circumstances an already existing system. Everywhere else the term "Reserve" was applied to men who had been passed through the ranks and were kept to fill up the strength of the Army for war. Nowhere are these men kept as a special body designed to fill up the waste of war. Every nation desires to be able at once to throw its whole strength into the struggle. Abroad the supply of waste will no doubt be made up from the men who could not from mere excess of numbers be employed at once in the first line. We have practically a very similar resource. The numbers that we can send out of the United Kingdom in the beginning of a war are limited by the conditions of sea transport. We should therefore only at first employ so many as our transports could convey, and as many as could be fed from sea. It becomes, therefore, important to decide at what numbers these should be reckoned. The inquiry, however, involves a great variety of considerations, and it will be convenient to postpone it for the present. For the moment it is necessary to point out certain defects which have been produced by the working of our present system. These in no way affect the evidence we have had of its superiority to any other that we have tried or that

has been proposed. They are only such as necessarily arise in the practical application of any new scheme. If we decided, as it is, since the reports of Lord Wantage's Committee and of Sir A. Haliburton have been submitted, practically certain that we shall not, altogether to change our present system, we should have to go through a similar experience in fitting sound practice to sound principles of organisation. In almost all things reform has great advantages over revolution. In matters of army organisation it is scarcely possible to overrate the importance of not indulging in perpetual radical changes, though at the same time there are few cases in which it is of more importance to adapt existing forms to the conditions of the present time. I pointed out that for the efficient working of the scheme it is indispensable that no undue strain should be thrown on the home battalions in the matter of supplying matured soldiers for the Army in India and the Colonies. Obviously the strain on any particular battalion depends largely on the number of battalions that are kept at home, in proportion to the number that have to be supplied abroad.

When the system was first introduced it was intended that there should be a slight excess in the number of home battalions over those on the foreign roster. With an Empire like ours, however, continually liable to sudden demands for services from the Army on a small scale, this arrangement was very soon upset. India for local reasons required a slight increase in the number of *battalions* in its garrison. Our rapidly-growing empire in South Africa made it necessary to send there a few more. The occupation of Egypt involved a direct

increase in the number abroad. As an illustration of what is always liable to happen to us, this case is exceptionally important, because our occupation throughout has been avowedly temporary, and to make permanent arrangements expressly to meet it would have presented difficulties of a political as well as of a financial kind. Nevertheless an occupation which has already lasted for fifteen years, and may last for a considerably longer period, cannot but tell severely on a system based on a seven-years service. Moreover, fifteen years is a long period in the history of our Empire within which to calculate that no fresh cause of disturbance will arise. Practically, the result has been that we have for many years from all these causes had an excess of battalions abroad as compared with those at home. This has thrown the whole system out of gear, not only because the number of battalions at home were, as a whole, set to do more work than had been calculated upon, but because the attempt to carry out a fair roster of service abroad disturbed the efficient working of almost every battalion in the Army. The system depended on the arrangements for relief between the home battalion and that which was abroad. Naturally in both battalions there are men of various lengths of service. In the home battalion the greater number of the men will usually be of very short service. A certain number in that battalion will consist of those who, having come home from abroad, will be nearing the time of their discharge to the Reserve. In the battalion abroad there will be hardly any very young soldiers, but there will be a considerable number who have nearly arrived at the end of their period of limited service. To send

abroad men who have only a few years left to serve, so that we are obliged to incur the expense of bringing them home within a short time, is obviously not an economical arrangement. It is therefore necessary to establish certain regulations determining the period of service at which men are allowed to be sent abroad. As long as the battalion abroad and the battalion at home, after the regulated period of service, interchange positions with one another, adjustments of individual soldiers are easily effected. The battalion going abroad leaves behind it for the home-coming battalion all the men who have only a few years of service to complete—those whom, therefore, it would not be economical for it to take abroad. It leaves also all men not up to the standard age at which men are permitted on medical grounds to go to India. Similarly, the battalion abroad leaves for the home battalion all the men of suitable service for India. Thus an adjustment between the two is very easily effected. But when the proportion between the number of battalions has been so disturbed that on the whole there has to be a longer period of service for the whole Army abroad, then in equalising this between different regiments it necessarily happens that both battalions of some regiments have to be for a year or two abroad at the same time. The adjustment which I have described cannot then be made, but necessarily a depot has to be formed for the reception of those whom the last outgoing battalion cannot take with it. Any new organisation requires some time to get into working order. Hardly has the depot been allowed time thus to work into order than one of the battalions comes home, and the depot is broken up,

probably just at the moment when it is beginning to be most efficient. Thus the excess of battalions abroad, which is a violation of the system, has been the one great cause of those defects which popular rumour has attributed to the system itself. Some one has remarked —I think truly—that the position of most regimental officers in regard to this question is happily described by saying that for them the troubles which have attended the application of the short-service system are like "clouds that take its colour from the rose, which, knowing not the darkness of the hour, but its own sadness knows." They have felt and truly expressed the fact that the situation was unsatisfactory. They have not, at least till very recently, had the system clearly enough explained to them to enable them to realise how entirely the defects of which they complained were due, not to the system, but to the failure to carry it out in its integrity.

Various proposals have been made to meet the difficulty, as it at present exists, of the excess of the battalions abroad. The defect of most of them is this, that they assume that because our occupation of Egypt, for instance, is of a temporary character, therefore it is only necessary to make temporary provision for the difficulty. The whole history of our Colonial and Indian Empire shows that that is a most dangerous view to take. Seeing that the entire efficiency of our Army depends on our keeping at least an equal proportion of battalions at home compared to the number abroad, and seeing further that we are perpetually liable to have to increase our garrison abroad for long though intermittent periods, there can be only one way in which the difficulty can be satis-

factorily met. It is by such an increase in the number of battalions of the Army as will during normal times leave us a surplus of two or three battalions at home, and when demand is made for a small increase of our foreign garrison, will still leave the numbers at least equal. Moreover, the excess of two or three battalions should be treated as a kind of nest-egg, never to be reduced, except for the very shortest time, without a proportionate increase to replace them. This will no doubt cost a little more than some other make-shift arrangement, but it is the only means by which the most economical system we have ever had can be kept in full efficiency, and be able to meet the continually occurring demands of the Empire.[1]

[1] I ought to make intelligible the nature of the scheme which has been at last adopted this year (1897), in order to give our much-tried system at last a chance of working effectively. It may or may not be modified hereafter, but as the most economical mode of meeting the most serious defect we had, so far as the Infantry is concerned, it is one that cannot but be received with satisfaction by all who have realised how grave our trouble has been. At the beginning of the year 1897, and for some time past, we have had an excess of eleven battalions abroad. It is obvious that every one brought home diminishes the excess by two, because the one so changed from the foreign establishment to the home establishment subtracts one from the excess abroad, and adds one to the numbers at home. Thus, if three battalions can be brought home, the excess will be diminished by six. Now it so happens that we have in the Guards two regiments of two battalions each, and one regiment, the Grenadiers, of three battalions. By raising two extra battalions of Guards, one for the Fusilier and one for the Coldstream Guards, we shall have in all nine battalions of Guards. If a brigade of three battalions could be sent to one of the Mediterranean stations or Egypt, the effect would be—

1. That we should be able to bring three battalions of the Infantry of the line home. Their transfer to the home from the

I must next make clear the fact that this question of the proportion between the garrison at home and abroad is altogether apart from the entirely separate difficulty which is created by the conditions of our small expeditions. The reserve system, admirable for completing our Army for effective war strength in the case of great emergencies, cannot be applied in the case of these minor wars. So frequent is the recurrence of some small cause of disturbance on some one or other of the frontiers of our vast Empire, that it would destroy the confidence of employers if we were perpetually calling the reserve men to the colours every time that an expedition had to be sent out. The case of Indian small wars is provided for by the condition in which the

foreign establishment would reduce the excess of battalions abroad from eleven to five.

2. We should have a complete division of two brigades of the Guards available for foreign service, whilst a third brigade would remain at home. Thus the creating of two extra battalions of the Guards, in itself a very desirable thing, will, so far as the restoration of the efficient working of the system is concerned, relieve our difficulty to the extent of six of the eleven battalions now in excess on the foreign establishment. It is at least obviously an economical method of securing that result. It may or may not turn out that those who usually enlist in the Guards will dislike the prospect of serving for a short spell in the Mediterranean. Opinions on that point are greatly divided. It is a question for experiment. So far as I can learn, it is not generally the men or officers now serving who dread at least the experiment. A transfer to Egypt would, I believe, with them be very popular.

There has long been one of the finest battalions in the service which has been apart from the general organisation of the Army. The Cameron Highlanders, which maintained in the 1882 campaign to the fullest extent its ancient renown, has had no second battalion. By adding one to it the excess of battalions abroad is reduced to four, which means, of course, that there are two

Indian battalions are maintained. Sir Redvers Buller some time ago suggested that this should be met by keeping the Mediterranean garrisons always in condition to furnish a small expeditionary force. Recruits from home can very well be trained in the Mediterranean, and would be sent out to re-supply the depleted garrisons simultaneously with the despatch of the expedition.

Such is a brief sketch of the general principles and conditions of our present system of recruitment. Certain objections are made to the system. One is that many tramps who have been in the Army go about the country and are found in poorhouses a great nuisance. Another that we do not obtain for the same money that Germany spends anything like the same force that Germany gets. A third that we have

battalions abroad which, if brought home, would restore the equality of the home and foreign establishments. It is assumed that their absence abroad is only temporary. From what has been said in the text it is obvious that, judging from past history, this is likely to prove an illusion. It is practically certain that before they are brought home, others will be required for some fresh emergency to be sent abroad. One, in fact, was ordered to go since the scheme was propounded. Though the order was in fact changed, the illustration is none the less valuable. No arrangement can be permanently satisfactory which does not give us in addition to equality a nest-egg of at least two or three battalions on which to draw for these ever-recurring emergencies. Nevertheless the fact that the absolute necessity for the working of our present system of maintaining a proper proportion between the home and foreign battalions has been at last officially dealt with, and that a long step has been taken towards remedying our evil condition, is a most important one, and deserves all recognition. The Chancellor of the Exchequer represents you, Sir or Madam Dingaan; and till you see that more is needed, and for the sake of all you hold dear are determined to have it, he must put on the screw against the most needed reforms.

only at home an army of boys. In regard to the first objection it must be remembered that there are certain tramps who, when they find their business slack, regularly enlist in the Army, and as naturally return to the tramp's life when they leave it. There are not a few of these who make a practice of deserting and fraudulently enlisting in other regiments in order to get a new free kit, having sold their old one. There are also a certain number of men who were thoroughly useless as workers before they entered the Army, and remain so all the time they are in it, returning very little changed by their time in the Army. For many, however, the Army is a very effective reformatory. For all those for whom it becomes so, and for all those who entered it with a good character and have maintained that character whilst they are in it, there is little or no difficulty in securing employment. Many who leave as non-commissioned officers get excellent billets. By the enterprise and public spirit of one retired officer, Captain Walters, the great Corps of Commissionaires for London has been created. Various agencies have been established, some in connection with our recruiting officers, some in connection with the officers in charge of our depots, for finding places for good men. Some private societies maintained by officers do much in this way, and most regiments have some kind of organisation for assisting the men who have left them to get employment. From every test by which the matter can be gauged on a large scale, the number of men who wish to get good employment and fail to do so is relatively small, though no doubt the numbers of habitual tramps who have at some time or other enlisted

are considerable. Among them are a large number of pensioners of the long-service system.

To turn to the next comment, that we do not get as many men or any approach to the same number as Germany. I have already indicated some of the reasons which make the comparison absurd. I propose now to state the whole case as far as possible, briefly recapitulating what I have previously said, and introducing those other points which could not be discussed apart from the system we actually employ.

1. Our immense colonial possessions, and especially the Crown Colonies and mere coaling-stations, require, in order that they may not be a danger instead of a strength to the Empire, a staff out of all proportion to the number of troops employed in them. Their mere enumeration shows how large an element this is in the calculation—Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, Aden, Singapore, Malacca, and Christmas Island, Perim, Ceylon, Hong-Kong, Mauritius, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia, St. Helena, Cape of Good Hope, Natal and Zululand, Bermuda, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Halifax (Nova Scotia), Barbados. In all of these there are actual stations of troops. My list does not include any of the great self-governing colonies, to which we supply large numbers of officers who, though paid for during the time of their actual employment there by the colony, come back on to our general list and swell its total. The same is the case with the large numbers lent to the Egyptian Government, to the Niger, South African, and East African Companies, Uganda and the Central African protectorate. It omits all those numerous dependencies which are under the general protection of

our Navy and Army, many of which often involve military expenditure, such as British Guiana, Tobago, Trinidad, British Honduras, Selangor, Perak, King George's Sound (Western Australia), an Imperial charge, —it omits St. Vincent, Antigua, St. Christopher and Nevis, Dominica, Montserrat, Virgin Islands, Borneo,— all in short of those possessions where troops are not actually quartered, but to which at any time troops may necessarily be despatched from some of the other stations for local reasons. It may be well doubted how many Britons know even the names of many of these possessions.

2. The fact, however, that we hold these vast and dispersed territories with insignificant numbers of troops, and therefore must have a staff proportioned not to the number of troops with which we economise their defence, but to the vast responsibilities and the ceaseless vigilance involved in it, is by no means the only cause which makes these possessions, valuable as they are, costly, if the mere number of troops be taken as the measure of cost. Most of those I have cited are the fortified coaling-stations which in the judgment of the Admiralty are necessary to secure our command of the seas, and to leave our admirals free to use all their naval force for pure naval action and victory against fleets opposed to them. Therefore certain protective works are necessary for them, and heavy guns have to be placed on them. The question whether we have done enough, too much, or too little in that matter is one of detail, as to which it will be perhaps admitted that it is safer to take the opinion of those who have dealt with the question on the spot, carefully supervised

as they have been by the ablest committees we knew how to form in London. The principle adopted has been rigidly and strictly to limit our expenditure on these passive defences and on the garrisons needed for them to the minimum that would ensure the protection of our coal or, where harbours are concerned, the security of our harbours, not against great expeditions but against hostile cruisers. The whole conception has been to free the right arm of Britain that it may secure the safety of our homes, colonial and other, and the security of our commerce by active warfare against hostile aggression. It is to be feared that some of those who are most anxious to secure this result have done all they could to interfere with it by assuming that this principle was ignored because they were not consulted as to the details. As, however, in the aggregate much work has necessarily to be done both in fortification and armament in places spread over the whole earth as widely as our commerce spreads, it does not take much of a witch at a riddle to see that this is a far more costly necessity than the erection and armament of defences within a Continental kingdom. Vast quantities of stores, much skilled labour, and an immense tonnage of guns have to be transported across the whole surface of the earth. Is this an element to be quietly dropped out of calculation?

3. I have already enlarged on the fact that the accessories which are involved in a voluntary system, the medical and veterinary departments, the better and more costly food, the greater comfort and convenience of the men, the fact that we must enlist boys and not men, and therefore spend additional time and cost in training

them—these, and many others of a similar nature, are far more heavy items than the difference between the pay of a British soldier and that of the conscripted soldier of the Continent.

4. It is not a little remarkable that those who compare unfavourably our product of strength per million of pounds sterling with that of Germany are, for the most part, those who have a dislike to the short-service system as applied to ourselves. Yet the greatest of all the reasons why the German army is so large in proportion to its expenditure is that they are able in a given period of seven or eight years to train with the same cadres between three and four times as many men as we do even under our present relatively short service. The necessities of our vast Empire oblige us, as I have explained before, to adopt for most of our Army a period of training of seven years with the colours and five in the reserve. The German now trains his men in two years. Obviously this is an enormous difference in point of cost per man.

5. I have sufficiently discussed the difference produced by the conditions of a rich and free commercial country, and need not repeat them.

6. The cost involved in the perpetual transport and exchanges of position both of troops and officers, the change of clothing involved between India, our various other distant positions, and home, is a very large and important element of expenditure.

7. All labour on barrack construction, or other contractors' work, has to be paid for at high British and not at low foreign rates.

8. Yet again we spend vast sums in four items

from which Germany is enormously relieved by her complete command of all the resources of the country for her army. I speak of our great tailoring establishment, of our educational establishments for every sort of artificer, armourer, carpenter, etc., urgently required as they are for our complicated modern weapons, of our large expenditure on sending infantry and artillery long distances to out-of-the-way places like Okehampton, and of our necessary purchase of ground large enough for manœuvres of troops. In Germany the best tailors, the best artificers in the whole country, are in the ranks, and like the doctors and the veterinaries, delighted to be employed on their proper trade. We have to purchase this labour in the open market or to devote costly machinery to developing it. The ground is obtained close to each of the large stations for practice in Germany, and strict regulation prevents any buildings from interfering with what is needed for the purpose. The whole country is available for the manœuvres that take place annually. In Austria lately 84 miles of general country in length by 76 in breadth were so used.

9. The comparison, however, even thus, cannot be fairly made without taking account of the sums which Germany spends indirectly on her army. In the first place, the food provided for the private soldier is so poor and bad that it is necessarily supplemented by large supplies contributed to them by their families. Again, the State has first, by using such railways as were Government property to compete with private enterprise, reduced the market value of private companies to a nominal figure, and then bought them up. When

these railways so bought up are used for the transport of war material, it obviously greatly reduces the War Budget; as obviously that result is secured at the expense of those whose property was ruined in order to secure it for the State. The railways and other Government monopolies are also used to provide for officers and non-commissioned officers on their being retired from the army. Thus the whole officers' and non-commissioned officers' pension-list is saved; and as the privates, after they have completed their training, are liable to be called to the colours at the mere option of the State, there is no reserve pay whatever required. Officers and men have most extensive privileges in regard to their payment for travelling by railway, and as to their admission to theatres, music-halls, etc. Yet again, vast sums from the indemnity paid by France have been employed on military defences of various kinds, and do not appear in the War Budget.

Whether it be within the competence of any of our great actuaries to make an estimate of the difference in the calculations of cost which all those various conditions require, I do not know. My own belief is, that if it could be carried out on any reasonable basis, the result would be to show that, taking into account the work it has to do, and the extent to which, thanks to the support of a great navy, it is able really to achieve it, our Army is incomparably the cheapest in the world. It abstracts less money's worth out of the country than any Continental system does, and does more for the money.

No one has ever faced fairly these considerations which I lay before you, yet men go on repeating the phrase that the country would be delighted to pay what-

ever is necessary for their defences if they only believed that they obtained their money's worth for their money. I am as certain as I can be of any fact in existence that you are beating the bush in vain as long as you ignore these facts. You may go on, of course, under the plea that you do not see that you get your money's worth for your money, following the example of those inhabitants of Constantinople, to whom Lord Wolseley recently referred, who kept in their tills the money needed for the defence of the State, only to provide the conquering Turk with the wealth which would have secured his defeat. You have the plausible excuse that if you refuse to examine the question you may take the numbers of German soldiers and their mere war-budget cost to the country and, comparing their number with ours, say that there must be waste in our system. If you really care enough for your country to weigh what I have here put before you, I do not believe that you will feel comfortable in resting on that plea.

Nevertheless it would be idle to deny that there are causes of waste of various kinds. Almost all of them are due to the relation of our parliamentary system to military expenditure. Let me make myself clear. I have never been able to accept the view of those soldiers or civilians who deride our system of placing a man who is not an expert at the head of our great spending departments. I am quite as likely to be assailed by civilians as by soldiers for saying so. Nevertheless the system will go on, and in the main it will go on because it is based on sound principles, which, despite all the abuse that is lavished on it, commend themselves to the common sense of the country. If I am a householder,

I have to employ experts of various kinds, plumbers, painters, glaziers, architects, gardeners. I cannot get what I want carried out without their advice, but I must decide what I want, and whether I can afford to follow their counsel. Now for you, Sir or Madam, the Secretary of State of any great spending department occupies the place of you in the position of householder. As your representative he is in honour bound to take you into his confidence, at least as far as he can do so without endangering your interests, by revealing facts that ought not to be known to those who may take advantage of the knowledge to your detriment. But he and not any expert as such must be supreme, because he is the spender, the householder—you. It is probably, though it causes many to blaspheme, in the main a sound instinct which leads Cabinets rather carefully to avoid assigning a particular office to those who are in any way experts in that department. They more nearly represent the master of the house who is not expert, and are more likely therefore to carry him along with them in any proposals they make. That is one story.

It is altogether another whether things that have come down to us by mere tradition, and have ceased to serve the purpose for which they were originally designed, ought to be allowed to put the country to wasteful expenditure. Let me take first this. In the days when Parliament was struggling to assert its power in the realm, it was provided that the exact number of troops to be raised in any year should be expressly recorded. Now that Parliament is supreme, the effect of this is, under a voluntary system by which the home army supplies at a certain particular time of

year large drafts for India, most disastrous. Naturally the numbers required for the home army, in order to maintain a certain standard, fluctuate enormously between the time when recruits are coming in freely and no drafts are going out to India, and the time when during the transport season great drafts are being sent out. The consequence is that every year the same thing happens. Recruiting, just when it is working most successfully, is stopped because the numbers sanctioned by Parliament have been reached. The mere fact that the flow is stopped for some months acts as a very severe check to its resumption. When the draft season comes on there are no recruits ready to take the places of the draft. No one, of course, would propose that Parliament should not decide what the strength of the Army in any given year should be, but there can be no reason why the numbers voted in every branch should not be so calculated as to allow of a free flow of recruits all the year as long as they will come in to an extent sufficient to supply the deficiency of the succeeding period of Indian drafts. Only, Sir or Madam, do not blame any Government if they do not do this. You must understand the matter, and help others to understand it; otherwise, if the check to recruiting be removed, it will be called a reckless increase of the Army. All waste of machinery tends to cause a diminished result for your sovereigns, therefore this is one of the things that involve a waste of money, though its actual result in increasing expenditure is not so obvious as it is in the other matters of which I have next to speak.

Another relic of ancient days is the rule that all money not expended within the year must be paid in to

the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt. I doubt if any provision ever made has led within the positive knowledge of so many men to such direct waste, Sir, of your hard-earned pelf as this has done. After a given day nothing that has not been completed, certified, and "billed" as it is called, can be paid for out of that year's estimates. It is impossible to foresee exactly how expenditure will run. Accordingly large margins have everywhere to be reserved. Then towards the end of the financial year, chiefly in February and March, there is a rush to spend as nearly as possible up to the hilt. It cannot be a wise and carefully thought out expenditure, and is most wasteful. The money paid to the National Commissioners does not represent real economies of expenditure, but chiefly the balance of the sums that have been kept back in the prosecution of needed works in order to protect those who have the spending from over-running the account. Surely it would be possible, without any real interference with the authority of the House in such questions, to devise a system which would put an end to this waste. Only under naval and military loans—bills which do not require to be voted each year—is it at present possible to ensure any economical expenditure. Even in these there is always the temptation for every one to present an appearance of economy which may often in the end prove most extravagant. Yet again, not long since Mr. Charles Williams, in an article in the *United Service Magazine*, cited a large and representative number of instances in which money had from sheer expenditure on useless objects been thrown away. In almost if not quite all these cases the initial cause of

this waste lay in the fact that since the question had been settled, and since it had therefore been decided that the money should be spent, so long a period had elapsed that all the conditions had changed. This continually happens as a consequence of the successive postponements to a more convenient season of alterations approved in principle. For instance, take a case which is very typical. Twenty years ago, huts at a certain station had become utterly uninhabitable. It had been decided in principle to replace them with permanent barracks. Forty years ago, when the huts were first built, this would have been a very convenient arrangement. The cost in the forty years would have been far less than the cost of keeping up the huts. At that time the station in question was a beautiful country quarter very little accessible from London, and admirably adapted in every way for the training of troops. The twenty years which passed before the huts had become quite unfit for human habitation, changed all the conditions of the station. The years which followed continually increased the change, till, with the access of railway accommodation and other causes, the place had become, not a country station at all, but a town in which all the conditions that had made it suitable for troops had all but disappeared. When, however, the huts proved hopeless for use, these changes were not fully recognised. It was supposed that as the accommodation for troops had disappeared, it ought to be replaced. Money, however, was not then or for many years later forthcoming. When the loan bill made it available, the old idea prevailed, and barracks that might with great advantage have been built elsewhere

were in fact built where they are little better than a mere encumbrance. I could multiply such cases almost indefinitely. They are all connected with what I may call the disconnection produced by annual Budgets. I do not of course mean that annual Budgets can be dispensed with, but that the difficulties they present require to be faced and dealt with if money is not to be wasted by these causes which make any fair comparison with the expenditure of other nations absurd. Another fruitful source of waste is the separation of the accounts of different departments and the competition between the departments to throw expenditure on one another. To take a simple but pregnant illustration. It would often be possible to reduce the national gas bill by providing more economical burners, but the burners are provided by a different sub-department from that which provides the gas. Ergo it is useless to show that a general economy will result from a slight increase of expenditure on burners. It would increase the bill that one sub-department has to present. If it were possible that in any way any department should get twice the credit for any economy it has been able to effect in the payments of another as compared with that which it gets for savings in its own, it would be, I am certain, a most economical arrangement. Almost all the cases which Mr. Williams established were due to the extent to which each department fights for its own hand.

Yet another vast cause of cost is traceable to our parliamentary system. "Questions in the House of Commons" have reached a stage of farce about which it is difficult to know whether it is a subject for laughter

or for tears. It is no exaggeration to say that a vast proportion of the clerical and other labour for which the country pays is expended in providing ministers with the means of fending off questions inconvenient to themselves or the country, quite as often the latter as the former. In so many of all these ways the money of Britain is spent against itself, that till the House takes the reform in hand of all these means by which money is thrown away, it is idle to make a comparison between our expenditure and that of foreign countries.

I believe I have established enough to show that while in its executive parts the Army is far less really costly to the country than is the army of any foreign Power, the conditions of our parliamentary system, and the mode in which expenditure is dealt with by the House, tend to a wasteful expenditure, such as in no other country occurs. In these respects, without in the slightest degree trenching on its own prerogatives, but by simply abandoning obsolete traditions, the House has a vast field for economical reform.

As to our army of boys at home, I think I have adequately dealt with that objection in the course of my previous explanation, and do not now propose to recur to it. There is, however, one aspect of the question on which, on general national grounds, I am anxious to say a few words. One of the difficulties which stand in the way of our recruiting an adequately stalwart army lies in the tendency of late years for the country districts to be depopulated, and for the towns to develop a population of by no means strong physical vigour. Football is becoming a profession for which men are paid high salaries. There is scarcely room for a large part of the

population to obtain ground for other forms of healthy exercise. Now, of late, we in the Army have been developing a system of physical training for our men which, under the general care and support of the Adjutant-General, has been most scientifically worked out by Colonel Fox, our Inspector of Gymnasia. It is as unlike the old, merely tricky and pyrotechnic gymnastics as two things can well be. It is expressly designed, and admirably applied, to develop the physical health and condition of a man or boy. I cannot help believing that if the very simple and inexpensive apparatus that is required for it could be provided on an extensive scale in towns, and all boys and girls after a certain age were required to pass through a course, and encouraged afterwards to keep up their training, it would largely tend to save us from that national deterioration in physical vigour with which the unhealthy conditions of our manufacturing towns now threaten us. At present there tends to be a terrible separation between the health and vigour of the upper classes, now more than ever devoted to physical exercise, and that of the children born of the too early marriages of the employés of the factories, and nurtured under circumstances most unwholesome in all respects. I look upon this as one of the most vital conditions of National Defence. I believe that Lord Wemyss, when he lately derided a proposal by the Commander-in-Chief for universal compulsory gymnasia as a means of national security, completely misconceived the facts to which Lord Wolseley referred. To begin with, the question of general health apart, our military training could be very much simplified and shortened if recruits joined us thoroughly well prepared in the estab-

lished physical drill. In the second and most important place, we should have a people behind us like that which stood behind the navies and armies of Elizabeth, instead of one out of which it is getting yearly more difficult to obtain either the soldiers or sailors that are needed to maintain the position our country has so long held among the nations of the earth.

It is obvious that in this chapter I have not dealt with the means by which we meet any attempts at invasion, nor therefore have I considered our various auxiliary forces, yeomanry, militia, and volunteers. That I reserve to a future chapter. My object in this chapter has been to show the general nature of our present system for the regular army, and the intimate connection which exists between the strength at which our home army is maintained, and the demands of India and the Colonies. In fact, at present the force which we maintain at home is rigidly fixed by these conditions alone. As an item of expenditure, however, it must be remembered that the auxiliary forces cost three millions sterling. It is therefore not fair, as is frequently done, to take the total sum, ignore the auxiliary forces, and then make comparisons with foreign armies.

CHAPTER V

THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH OUR STRENGTH CAN BE BEST APPLIED

THE next stage in our inquiry brings us to the question how we can most effectually employ the strength we possess, both naval and military, in the defence of the Empire. It is impossible without this to ascertain how far any given force is adequate for the purpose, to see in what direction we either possess any surplus of available strength, or require what we have to be augmented. From what has been already said it is obvious that the army which we maintain at home has its numbers actually fixed by the necessity for keeping up an adequate supply of men for the Indian Army and for that of the Colonies. The whole question on which I have at present touched as to the necessity for a very small increase in the number of the home battalions turns solely upon the necessities involved in this condition. Nevertheless, thanks to our reserves, we have the means of making up a certain force at home, and the question is how, in general terms, can this be most efficiently employed, so as to safeguard what is entrusted to its care.

It is of course impossible to forecast the exact

circumstances of any future war. Those who ask us to say where we could in any case carry on a campaign misapprehend the whole conditions of the higher strategy, or what may properly be called political strategy. It is of the very essence of any successful combination of navies or armies that the nature of the stroke shall be adapted to the circumstances of the time, and shall be kept as strictly secret as possible up to the moment when the blow is delivered. The expedition to the Crimea, long advertised beforehand, may be safely taken as a model of how such things ought not to be done. Apart from all question of its political rectitude, the attack upon Copenhagen may be taken as a model of what is wanted in such matters, or, in our times, Lord Wolseley's stroke against Ismailia preliminary to the Tel-el-Kebir campaign may serve the same purpose. In both these latter instances, the supremacy of our Navy was the means which enabled us to land by surprise and under the most favourable conditions an army sufficient for the purpose required. But as an illustration of the general principles involved in sea power, and of the necessary co-operation of an army moved by sea in order to enable the fruits of naval supremacy to be reaped, I must again refer to Captain Mahan's volumes. Concerned mainly with the question from a seaman's point of view, Captain Mahan has not elaborated the record of the services done by the portable army to the navy during the great struggle.

To anybody who reads between the lines it is clear from his narrative that the possession of Corsica and subsequently of Sicily, as well as the defence of Acre, Abercromby's victory at Aboukir, the capture of Copen-

hagen, the seizure of the West Indian Islands, all of which were the achievements of land forces, transported under the protection of the Navy, were essential to the effective carrying out of the policy which he shows to have been so powerful.[1]

So too it has been said of India that it is "the gift of the sea power." In a sense the term is true, but the great campaigns which placed us in the position which we there hold were carried out by Clive, by Wellington, by Napier, Havelock, Outram, Clyde, and other soldiers, and no navy, without abnegating its proper functions altogether, could possibly have presented us with the gift, which nevertheless could not have been secured without its supremacy. These facts are so simple that it may seem to be hardly worth while to state them. Yet the principle which they involve is continually forgotten. One has to be perpetually ramming, cramming, and jamming Mr. Kinglake's admirable phrase, "the amphibious power of Britain," in season and out of season, into the minds of one's countrymen. For if it is, as I hope to show presently, an exaggeration to speak of the Navy as our single line of defence, it is also true that so to speak of it underrates its most important value to us. Under all conditions of war and in all circumstances naval and military, a purely passive defence is hopeless. There is a certain amount of hypocrisy about the way in which our countrymen habitually speak of all their forces as defensive forces. Defensive forces, in the proper sense of the term, they are and ought to be. We have the

[1] The whole *Life of Nelson*, published since the above was in type, teems with illustrations of the mutual dependence of the two services on each other.

best reason possible for being in a national sense one of the most conservative nations of the world. There is probably not a man in the Army, in the Navy, or out of them, who wishes for any territorial possessions on the Continent of Europe. We have, on the other hand, certain national duties to fulfil. Those duties cannot be discharged by invariably adopting a purely passive rôle. We can only gain our defensive objects by retaining the power to strike as well as the power to ward off a blow. Captain Mahan has well shown that even in the great war the position of Britain was at first necessarily a defensive one. That necessity has since that time been greatly increased by the enormous development of the territory which we have to defend. Both Captain Mahan and Admiral Colomb have, in their different ways, shown clearly that the very obligation of defence enforces upon us in practice for action the most aggressive and vigorous procedure in order to drive the stress of war home upon the shores of our enemies, so as at one and the same time to keep it as distant as possible from our most vulnerable commerce, and to produce that pressure which alone can secure for us the restoration of peace. It is under this aspect that the full force and meaning of "amphibious" strength requires to be understood. It must be remembered that in all warlike operations the question at issue can only be decided not by the number of troops that are enrolled on the musters of opposing powers, but by the number of efficient troops that are present at the decisive points of action. Probably to most of us the clearest illustration of the importance of this distinction is to be found in the history of the Crimean War. There Russia, with all her vast

resources in men, found herself unable to deliver more than very limited numbers on a point of her own territory. Nor could she even succeed in sending the armies that she did into the Crimea without the most appalling sacrifice of men and of material in the process of doing so. That was due to the difficulties of land transport, the absence of sufficient good roads and railways, the difficult nature of the country, and the character of the weather with which she had to deal. Now, whatever may have been the case in the days of Nelson, in these times of steam navigation and of large and powerful ships, a country possessed of the command of the sea is able to transport from point to point along the sea coast armies and their stores with a facility which no land transport can approach. Even where largely-developed facilities of railway transport exist, these are necessarily laid down on certain definite lines, not determined by the precise conditions of such attack as may be applied against them. They are liable to destruction at many points. The movement of troops by railway is, unless for small numbers or great distances, necessarily a very slow process because of the time which is required to entrain and detrain large bodies of men. Therefore, if the power possessing the command of the sea has also large command of independent sea transport and a highly efficient mobile army which can be landed at any given point equipped for a campaign with great rapidity, it is clear that it may strike a blow at some definite point which may be of very great importance long before any adequate force can be assembled to oppose it.[1]

[1] My statement of this fact has been so habitually and recklessly misrepresented that I implore my readers to study its repeated illustration in the lucid pages of *Nelson's Life*.

The Black Sea, exclusive of the Sea of Azoff, has a coast line of at least 2500 English miles. There is probably no part of that where it might not under certain circumstances be of importance to land a British army. The army opposed to a force in possession of the Black Sea would be liable to an attack at any point of that whole line wherever it was possible to effect a landing; and when once the hostile cruisers had been driven into their ports, the general and admiral co-operating together in the Black Sea would be able to act with the certainty that the enemy could have no means of knowing where the blow was about to be delivered. Probably at no time would the uncertainty extend to the whole of the 2500 miles; but when it is remembered that the whole of the common frontier of Germany and France is only about 200 miles in extent, the contrast is too sharp not to be intelligible. As an object lesson of its effects, even in the days when steam navigation had not attained its present development, a study of Mr. Kinglake's brilliant description of the effects of the Kertch Expedition may be commended to any one who desires to appreciate the nature of the subject. It must, however, be realised that I only take this case of the Black Sea as an illustration of the nature of the power which we possess, provided we have a supreme Navy and an adequate Army. The same advantage which we in this respect should have on these shores, France has as against Italy, at all times and at once, in a far higher degree as long as her navy is supreme in the Mediterranean. The coast of Italy, though not as extensive as the coast of the Black Sea, is enormous in proportion to the extent of her territory.

It is liable to attack everywhere. It is very nearly ten times as long as the common frontier of France and Germany, even excluding the coast lines of Sardinia and Sicily from consideration. France, with her ports of the Riviera, of Corsica, Tunis, and Algeria, has such facilities for embarking troops that it has been calculated that she could send an expeditionary force, sufficiently complete for so short a transport as would be required, of 120,000 men. The danger which is held over Italy by this possibility is greatly enhanced by the difficulties which are presented to movement from her north-eastern to her south-western coast by the chain of the Apennines. It is hardly too much to say that it is almost impossible to conceive by what defensive arrangements on shore Italy could, throughout the greater portion of her territory, ward off the danger of such an attack as is thus threatened—that is to say, that supposing the Italian fleet has been crushed at sea, and all Italian cruisers driven into their ports, so that no information of the movements of French fleets or transports could reach the Government, it is impossible to suppose that the Italians could assemble an army with sufficient rapidity to prevent such an expedition as I have described from seizing almost any point that might be desired either of the islands or of the mainland. This danger is thoroughly felt and understood in Italy, and is one among many reasons which have induced the rulers of that kingdom, at the most serious risk to their finances, to develop their navy, to keep up their army, and to cultivate the most friendly relations with England. Obviously, whatever assistance is given to or withheld from Italy is assistance given to or withheld from her

allies, whoever they may be at the time; and as the effect of the alliance of our fleet alone is sufficient to liberate for external action the whole army of Italy, the power we here hold is enormous.

Before drawing out the effect which this condition of things has upon the problem of our national defence, or rather upon the only true defence, the means by which we can best use our power, it is necessary to cast a glance at the present political situation in Europe. Ten years ago it seemed to me, and it seems to me now, that it was the case then that, assuming, what I shall presently show, that we have at all times the power of giving or withholding most efficient aid to any of the Great Powers of the Continent, we could best maintain the peace of the world and the security of our own Empire by a firm alliance first with Italy and then, through her, on well-defined conditions, with the league of the Central Powers, provided they were ready to secure for us peace in Asia in return for our securing them peace in Europe. My ideas received the warmest possible approval in very high, if not the highest, quarters in Germany, Austria, and Italy. So far as I am able to judge from many indications, public opinion in Britain was steadily working round to that view. Many who did not approve of it recognised the fact that it had become the prevailing opinion among all those who considered such questions at all. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to make Continental statesmen understand the conditions under which public opinion is formed in Britain, and the nature of its effect on our politics and statecraft. Lord Beaconsfield's famous saying about the Conservative party is much

truer of Britain as a whole. It is a great self-governing country, and on any subject on which public passion is not suddenly roused by some overt acts or words that reach every one simultaneously, it takes a long time for a new idea to penetrate into the minds of the great body of those who determine the votes of the electorate or the policy of British statesmen. Hence, with great anxieties and responsibilities on their shoulders, the statesmen of the Continent become impatient with the slow movement of political thought on foreign policy in Britain, and looking upon the country as given over to trading considerations, they venture on some overt insult just to rouse the sleepy animal. Suddenly, in a moment, all is changed. The question of foreign politics has passed from Downing Street to the gutter, and all between. Statesmen, who could not have ventured on using even strong language till then, now take action as promptly and decisively, and with more confidence in public support than those of any other nation could do. It is all most intelligible to us, and needs no explaining; but it completely confuses those who live under an altogether different system from ours. Hence more than one foreign nation is apt at times to take action or use language as regards Britain which can hardly be to its own advantage. France or Germany, in fact, at such times does everything in its power to depress its friends and to give encouragement to its enemies. For some time past this has been the process which has been adopted in Germany, till it would be absurd to pretend at present that any but a dreamer could imagine that for a long time to come there is now the remotest chance of any alliance between Britain and a combination

of which Germany is the centre. That in no way alters the nature of the pressure which we are able to exercise upon the armed nations of the Continent, though it no doubt very materially alters the direction in which we may have to apply it. As long as there were two definite groups of Powers arrayed against one another—one, at least, in the main desirous of keeping peace; the other waiting, for very obvious reasons, the moment when a favourable opportunity should occur for war—it was tolerably clear that our interest lay in supporting those who desired peace, provided we could obtain their support against aggression in return. Now everything is for the time at least in a condition of unstable equilibrium. France seems to be getting tired of a mere servile adherence to Russian policy which brings her little advantage. There is a tendency at least towards a rearrangement of forces. It does not appear by any means certain that France and Italy may not draw together. Possibly that may tend to connect us with what would then become at least one of the most powerful combinations of naval power ever formed, with ample military power to make it effective. The Turkish Empire now seems to threaten once again, as it has so often threatened before, to break up from internal disorder and the hopeless corruptness and tyranny of its government. The times are therefore so stormy that it is impossible to say almost from hour to hour what combinations may take place. What concerns my purpose is that no possible combination that can be foreseen tends to diminish the importance for any side that it may espouse of the action of the sea power and of the amphibious strength of Britain.

Therefore, apart altogether from the political conditions of the hour, and apart from that state of things with which I dealt ten years ago, I am anxious now to bring out those facts which make for the power of Britain, as long as the map of Europe is arranged as it is at present. In order, however, to illustrate how the power of Britain may be thus used in almost any combination of the Powers of Europe, it is convenient first to take the combination hitherto most familiar to us, that of the three Powers—Germany, Austria, and Italy—as against the alliance of France and Russia. Neither the "Concert" nor the clouds of 1897 have yet destroyed that grouping as the permanent element of the situation. The opportunities which, in a military sense, are thus presented to us can then be easily examined, and it will not be difficult to show how far any variation in the grouping of the Powers will affect the extent to which our power will tell on the new combination.

Even if for a moment there is a possibility, mainly due to the impatience of German statesmen with the fact that they cannot make definite terms with Britain, that the three empires may draw together, hardly any one supposes that that arrangement can be a permanent one. Nothing that has happened has even tended to allay the mutual suspicion of one another of Russia and Germany, or the sense in the minds of Austrian statesmen that for them it would be a fatal thing for the Black Sea to become a Russian lake, and the Dardanelles a strait through which Austrian ships would have to pass under the guns of a powerful and then even dominant Power. Therefore, whatever the temporary combination may be, the importance of the armed aid

which we are able to give to or to withhold from Germany against Russia, or to Russia against Germany, is an important element in our power. *Mutatis mutandis* the same thing is true of our relations with France and Germany, and with France and Italy. Abundantly is it true of the assistance which we are able to give or to withhold, under almost any condition of things, in dealing with Austria. So keenly is this felt by Austrian statesmen that they are, and have long been, almost as eager for a firm alliance with us as with Germany. Recent events have not a little tended to make them trust us somewhat more than they do a Power which could carry on negotiations of an at least doubtful kind with the Czar at the very moment when she was cementing an alliance with Austria for protection against the same Power. If it be only as a check on the vagaries of Germany, it is well that our people should realise how much we have in our hands to offer or to withhold from her. To begin with, for the reasons I have already given, it is scarcely possible for Italy to maintain her position in the Central Alliance at all if Germany makes it impossible for us to assist her allies. Though this is, as I shall show, by no means the only pressure which we are able to exercise on the mighty forces of the Continental Powers, it is perhaps convenient to discuss in relation to it the nature of the advantage with which all such means of bringing our influence to bear on them supplies us. Comically enough, I have found that those who had not studied my statement of the case, but felt themselves, nevertheless, quite competent to discuss it, have alleged that in showing that we were able to give or to withhold certain very im-

portant help to the mighty armies of different Powers on the Continent, I showed how we could help them effectively enough, but I failed to show how that would be of advantage to us. So, then, if I go into a market with money in my hand ready to purchase certain wares which I do not possess, or at least do not possess in sufficient quantity for my needs, the fact that I have the money is of no advantage to me, but only to those from whom I propose to buy. A novel doctrine certainly, and one to which I must concede the credit of being a humorous one. Obviously it is for a well-informed diplomacy to take advantage of those means of influencing Continental Powers which I have shown that it possesses. My business was to show that from a military point of view our naval power could operate with telling effect on the European situation as it exists. The advantage to us may perhaps be best illustrated by the case of Austria and Germany.

Prince Bismarck once used an expression, which has become proverbial, about the bones of a Pomeranian soldier. By it he illustrated his belief that a statesman has no right to sacrifice the lives of his countrymen in mere crusading enterprises with which they have no concern. If Austria were entirely unable to furnish important aid to the defence of the German monarchy, her statesmen would say of Austria as Bismarck said on that other occasion, "We are very sorry for you, but we cannot think it right to sacrifice the lives of our soldiers, who are enlisted for the service of their own country, in order to do you a good turn." As, on the contrary, the alliance of Austria is of the greatest importance to the German Empire, the German statesmen

unhesitatingly pledge themselves under certain conditions to fight in the cause of Austria. This is what is meant by the "Do ut des" principle. To me it seems the very essence of national morality for statesmen. I say this emphatically, because I have heard it attacked as a purely selfish and unchristian principle of action.

I can only say for my own part, and I believe the instincts of the great majority of my countrymen are with me in saying it, that it seems to me that the act of a statesman who sends soldiers to war in a cause in which national duty and right are not involved, is criminal and murderous. On the contrary, when it is clear that two Powers have a common national duty in resisting aggression, when each of them may be crushed severally, but are able when united to present so strong a force that they are able by the mere certainty of their union to ensure peace, then it becomes the highest duty of the statesmen of the two countries to make such arrangements as will secure that result. I think that this is the feeling with which most of us read the history of the relations of Prussia with Napoleon during the time when he was crushing Austria and bribing Prussia with perpetual sops. Of course any brief formula may be so turned as to be selfish and dishonourable in its meaning; but in so far as the formula "Do ut des" means that British statesmen cannot hope, and have no right to hope, that they will be allowed to sit by in utter indifference to the fate of the Continent without suffering for it by finding themselves isolated, it seems to me not an immoral principle, but one based on the soundest morality. A statesman cannot be

judged on the same principles as an individual. He is charged with an enormous responsibility. Assuredly even before that Tribunal to which the unjustly condemned by human judges appeal, he will be held first responsible for those whose lives and honour, with the sanctity of their domestic hearths, were entrusted to his care. It is therefore a question of strictly moral obligation for us to know what power is in our hands for action in these matters. No man can be held responsible for doing that which he cannot do, and no nation can sum up the obligations which lie upon it without realising first what its power is. It is for this reason that I desire to state briefly here what I have elsewhere elaborated, the means of action which we possess in Europe, and the mode in which we can apply them for the purposes of national defence. I have already shown what great means of action we have or may have in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea. But in all our wars the Baltic has been almost as important a field for us as the Mediterranean. It is not less important in our days than it was formerly. It is, if possible, a more valuable field of action now than then.

As long as the danger of a real war-alliance between Russia and France hangs over Central Europe, Denmark as a stepping-stone for one very effective form of invasion of Germany must always be an important element in the question. Her ample sea-board makes her at once peculiarly exposed to the attacks of a dominant sea power, and if that dominant power were the Russo-French Alliance, her position would offer great facilities to either or both Powers for landing troops that might penetrate into the heart of Germany in rear of the great

belt of fortifications that have been thrown out towards France.

The narrowness of the proper frontier between France and Germany continually suggests the question by what means either Power may avoid the necessity of crossing it. A menace therefore from the side of Denmark by an adequate force would be a serious one for Germany. Similarly, it must depend upon the balance of naval power how far the whole northern coast of Germany is open to very much such attacks as I have described as threatening Italy from France. More especially is this the case in regard to the province of East Prussia. The sea-coast of that province has been elaborately fortified by Germany. Those fortifications are most important both for the purposes of protection against direct attack by Russia through the province of East Prussia, and as serving as a base or source of supply for German armies striking against a Russian force in Poland. They are exceedingly strong against a pure land attack, but would probably succumb without much difficulty, after a certain time, to a combined attack by land and sea carried out by a Power that had complete command of the Baltic. Considering the preponderance of naval force which would be at the command of an alliance between Russia and France, it is obvious that here also a great sea Power which can throw its weight into the opposite scale, may be able to render services of extreme value to the opposing alliance.

When one has been discussing a question of this kind for some time one gradually discovers points on which one has not made oneself clear. I was once asked, "Why should we undertake such expeditions in

the Baltic and towards Denmark, seeing that Russia has shown herself so weak in the 1877–78 campaign that we need have no fears of any action that she could take?" Now, in the first place, I have proposed no expeditions in that direction at all. I have only said that we have it in our power, provided always that our Navy be supreme, to stop other people from carrying out expeditions which they may be strongly tempted to undertake. In any great war in which we have been interested our Navy has always been employed in the Baltic. I only say that if our Navy be so employed hereafter, there are certain conditions of the present relations of the European Powers which offer opportunities to our Navy for certain special forms of action. Captain Mahan has shown how enormously powerful our Navy was in exercising pressure upon the military Powers during the great war. Supposing that the whole land frontier of Russia were closed by Germany and Austria, I do not think that any of those forms of naval pressure upon her which he has so graphically described would be diminished in their efficiency in our time. The special conditions which I have described are simply so much additional valuable work that may be done in our time by sea power.

To the objection that we need take account of none of these things because of the experiences of the 1877–78 campaign, I answer that the task which Russia then undertook, and before which she to a great extent certainly collapsed, was by no means a small and easy task, but one of exceeding difficulty, which might have tried the resources of the most formidable of Powers. A winter campaign across the Balkans, carried

on through the semi-civilised provinces of Turkey, was, in point of those physical difficulties which caused the greatest losses to the Russian army, a very different affair from a march upon Paris through the cultivated plains of France richly provided with good roads and railways.

It is curious how difficult it is to keep men's minds on an even balance between exaggerated fears and exaggerated contempt for so little understood a Power as Russia. At one time one is told that because of the enormous numerical force of the Russian army it is ridiculous for any Power to attempt to resist her will; at the next, that because the Russian army could not overcome such physical obstacles as hardly any other Power would have attempted to face, therefore she is a military "quantity" that may be altogether neglected. I think, therefore, that if Germany finds it worth while to ally herself with Austria, because for reasons into which I need not here enter Austria is able very powerfully to contribute to the defence of Germany against Russia, it is well worth the while both of Germany and Britain, despite the excited passions of the hour, to consider whether analogous circumstances do not exist as between them. It seems to me that from the point of view which I have already discussed, the single question for the statesmen of the two countries is, whether they are not better able to ensure peace or, if war be forced on them, to carry on war by a defensive alliance than by isolated action.

It is not to be expected that the importance to either Power of the alliance of the other should be so immediately realised, or generally understood, as is the case

between the two great German Powers. It needs that the matter should be thoroughly debated in public and should sink into the minds of the people of both countries before the question can enter the region of practical politics. But both in Germany and in Britain great progress has been made in at least an understanding of the question. The hot haste with which the German Government is pressing on their fleet indicates how clearly they understand it. It would be strange indeed if a book of such power as that of Captain Mahan did not, in the long run, tend to affect the minds of Continental statesmen so as to produce a higher appreciation of the enormous importance to them of the alliance of the great sea Power. There have been times when the reports they have received of the internal weakness of Austria have tended to make German statesmen doubt whether alliance with her did not increase the danger of war with Russia without contributing a sufficient element to the resisting power of Germany to compensate the increased risk. On the whole, however, in the case of a neighbouring Power actually covering certain very important frontiers of Germany, the hesitation has not led to more than an occasional earnest demand that Austria would perfect her military organisation. In the case of our own Asiatic relations with Russia, all the circumstances are far more remote and difficult for them to ascertain with certainty. Till lately the frontier which we desired to keep inviolate has been ill-defined and subject to the possibilities of quarrel, the nature of which it was difficult for European statesmen to understand. All these elements tended, up to the time of the famous telegram,

to make German statesmen rather hanker after an alliance with Britain than ready to commit themselves to definite pledges. That very Pamir incident which caused us anxiety some time ago has, however, now led to a clearing up of that part of the frontier which has not hitherto been delimitated. Considering the smallness of the numbers of Russian troops actually maintained in Asia, and the vast accumulation on the western frontiers of the empire, it is difficult to believe that German statesmen can consider that any alliance with Britain which covered Asia as well as Europe would entail upon them such risk of being involved in the quarrel of another Power as is entailed by the alliance with Austria. The assistance which we are able to offer to the Central Alliance in Europe is, when it is properly understood, of such vast importance and has so penetrated into the minds of German statesmen, and undoubtedly into the mind of the Emperor himself, that I cannot help believing that any difficulty in securing, if we wish it, a guarantee of peace on the "Do ut des" principle must be due to the entire want of training of our own statesmen in the higher strategy which is one of the essential conditions of the diplomatic knowledge of all European Ministers. They get excellent advice, but that is altogether another matter from following it out with conviction into diplomacy. We have so much to offer that the danger is rather lest we should ask too little in return, lest we should be content to make mutual arrangements in Europe without taking Asia into account.

Now it is the peculiar condition of our Asiatic frontier which makes it desirable for us to enter into

a great defensive alliance. It is not because we have at present any immediate reason to fear a collision on a large scale with the Russians in Asia that it is important to us to be able to bring pressure upon Russia elsewhere than in India. It is rather, as I have shown, because the steps which Russia may take for improving her position against us are beyond our immediate reach, and because we are yet committed to pledges wisely or unwisely undertaken to resist them, that we want to make our power tell where we can employ it more at our ease. Captain Mahan has traced in case after case with what decisive effect in past times our sea power was brought to bear upon the great territorial empire of Russia. To some extent, no doubt, we still retain that means of action, but the development of railways and of intercourse across the western land-frontier of Russia has materially modified it. If we attempted as we did in 1780, and again in 1788 and 1801, to exert pressure upon Russia by naval action in the Baltic as long as the western land-frontier of Russia was open to her, the conditions would be very different now from then. Captain Mahan tells us that under the pressure of the British Orders in Council, and of Napoleon's Continental System, which by no means interfered with land transport across the western frontier of Russia, "the Czar felt the ground trembling under his feet." "Alexander feared war; but he remembered his father's fate and feared assassination more." The destruction of sea commerce for Russia then meant the destruction of all her commerce. In order that the same result should be produced now it is necessary that the land frontier of Russia should be closed. Thus the power of the Central Alliance and that of Britain

are complementary of each other. Together that pressure may be brought upon Russia which made Alexander prefer to run the risk of war with Napoleon, master of all the rest of the Continent, rather than that which was involved in a contest with the great sea Power. The mere statement of the case shows how great to either Power is the value of alliance of the other. Captain Mahan has logically demonstrated that the Czar was forced to prefer the invasion of his country, the defeat within it of his armies, and the burning of Moscow, to the losses involved in the destruction of commerce at sea, at a time when transport across the land frontier was only difficult. Is it not clear that the combined action in our times of a closure of the land frontier and of the sea would put upon Russia a more potent pressure than could be exercised by the combined armies of Germany and of Austria? Vast therefore as are those advantages which we are able to offer to the Continental Powers by the direct action of our Navy in protecting Italy, in commanding for aggressive purposes the Black Sea, in prohibiting the use of Denmark as a means of aggression for Russia and France against Germany, in protecting the northern coast of Germany, and especially in rendering secure the sea fortresses of East Prussia, it yet appears to me that none of them, scarcely all of them together, are equal in importance to the services which we are able to render in completing the line of investment of the Russian frontier in combination with Germany and Austria. This is an aspect of the case the importance of which I had not myself realised until it was brought home to me by the study of Captain Mahan's history. It seems

to me very greatly to enhance the value both of our alliance to Germany, and of the German alliance to us. The case of the alliance of Alexander with Napoleon after the peace of Tilsit is the only instance in which, prior to the Crimean War, the action of our fleet in the Baltic had not been to produce immediate compliance with our demands on the part of Russia. The case of the Crimean War is especially significant, because that which rendered our naval blockade of the coasts of Russia comparatively inoperative was the neutrality friendly to Russia of Prussia, and the improved facilities of land communication compared with those of the period of the great war. Unless the teaching of history be altogether false, the Central Powers and Britain together are able without active land-campaigning to bring such a pressure to bear upon Russia as would force her to submit to almost any terms. To me it seems as though the case were analogous to that of two states which, being under the necessity of making war with a third, were unable either of them separately to manufacture gunpowder, because one of them possessed the materials of saltpetre but no sulphur and charcoal, while the other possessed ample supplies of sulphur and charcoal but had no saltpetre. Therefore, as it seems to me, the true means of securing the defence of our Indian frontier lies in bringing home these facts to our own people, in taking advantage of their importance in all negotiations with Germany and the Central Powers, and when the facts are fully realised, taking further advantage of them to secure such a treaty as will enforce peace in Europe and peace in Asia.

For these reasons it still seems to me that as a

"Counsel of Perfection," as an ideal, that is to say, of what would really serve best in the interests both of Britain and of Europe, this grouping of the Powers is most favourable for us, provided that, appreciating the advantages we are able to offer her, Germany is ready to behave herself, as she has much interest in doing, in matters South African and other. In the actual present and proximate condition of affairs, it at least looks as if for a time, the length of which no one can forecast, the condition of the Turkish Empire, and all that it involves, would determine the grouping of the Powers. The future is emphatically just now "on the knees of the gods." What will come out of it can hardly be guessed from hour to hour. Nevertheless every incident serves to show the importance of the influence of Britain as a European Power. When admirals are the agents of the will of Europe, sea power at all events is to the fore. Moreover, as Greece and the contiguous Turkish coasts are emphatically places "where land and sea do much intertwine," the second form of English power is applicable in a very high degree. Here, as during the Russo-Turkish campaign, the relative facility with which an army can act, operating from the coast, as compared with one that has to pass over the territory of Turkey in Europe, ill provided as it is with roads or railways, is a very important factor. The forces that can determine any issue on the frontiers of Greece and Turkey are not the numbers that may be available in Germany, Austria, or Russia, but those that can be supplied with food and ammunition on the Thessalian frontier. So measured, the armed force of Britain is more than the equivalent of that of all the three empires combined. The three

empires together are not able to place on that frontier a larger army than any one of them can. No one of them could feed and supply an army in that region with anything like the facility that Britain can. The combined effect of fleet and army are immeasurably more effective factors thrown into the cauldron of European politics than all the forces of the three great military Powers. The case is altogether different in Armenia. There land and sea do not much intertwine.

The main thesis which I have attempted to establish in this chapter may now be thus drawn together. In speaking of National Defence we use a form of expression very nearly the equivalent of the boxer's phrase —"the noble art of self-defence." The boxer understands that to mean that he is to learn to ward off the blows of his adversary certainly, but that that will be a very unlikely way to terminate the contest unless he learns also how to knock his opponent "out of time." For nations, as for boxers, this is true. To dream of National Defence as a defence of these islands alone, or a passive defence of the whole Empire alone, is to condemn ourselves to that most unfortunate form of fight long since described by Juvenal, where the enemy does all the beating, and you have only to submit while you are being beaten. That no empire on this earth would, under these conditions, be so hard to defend as that of Britain scarcely needs demonstration. None, taking together population and territory, is so vast. None is so dispersed over the world's surface. As I have shown in a previous chapter, the variety of types in the attacks that may be made on it are more numerous than those that can be directed against any other.

On the other hand, looking at the question from the point of view of the teacher of the "noble art of self-defence," these dispersed positions properly defended, as we have now every prospect that they will be, are so many footholds of advantage in any contest in which we may be engaged. They give to our Navy, and therefore to our portable Army, a freedom of movement not possessed by any other Power. There is no possible antagonist who may not thus be made to feel the might of Britain. In all contests, nevertheless, it is not enough to reckon up the forces on one side of the question. It is necessary also to consider the nature of the forces that may be brought against us. Now, with a world in arms, it would be a rather serious matter if it was likely to be unanimous against us. As a matter of fact, the causes which make for mutual antagonism among the various Powers are too strong to allow that to be at all probable. It becomes, therefore, of importance to consider how the unique form of strength which we possess can be most effectively employed under the actual conditions which exist at any given moment. There are, however, certain permanent features, such as the nature of the coast-line of Europe, and certain semi-permanent features, such as the frontiers in a military sense of the European Powers, which must under any conditions determine the nature of the action of an amphibious Power. My object has been, therefore, to show that the nature of the influence which we are able to exert, either against or in behalf of any of the European nations, is of such a kind that, taking account of the permanent and semi-permanent features of the map, we ought, by the use of a satisfactory diplomacy

necessarily based on this knowledge of our strength, to be able to gain most easily such objects as we put before ourselves, by securing, if need be, the movement in our favour of armies other than our own—that in fact we can now, as in the past, translate naval, and still more amphibious, strength into the full equivalent of the armies of the Continent, even though we do not attempt, as we never can attempt, to rival them in numerical strength. For that purpose we have need of "a supreme Navy, an adequate Army, and an incomparable diplomacy."[1]

[1] A toast given at a dinner of the Geographical Society by its President, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORCE WE NEED

FOR the reasons given in the last chapter, it appears to me that it must be entirely upon the development of our naval power, and of a military force adapted to take advantage both of our command of the sea and of our great mercantile marine, that our power for effective action must necessarily depend. To devote all our energies, for instance, to doubling in time of war against Russia the British army which we maintain in India would have for us many disadvantages.

In the first place, from the nature of the territory which lies between us and Russia, to do so would be to exercise our power where it can be least effective. In the second place, it would be to remove all our military force from Europe, and to leave these islands without any serious body of regular troops that could be rapidly recalled in case of emergency. It would deprive us of that means of taking advantage of our command of the sea for land operations which has proved so effective in former wars—which has, in fact, given to us India itself and almost all of our colonial empire. It is impossible to say precisely how and where such a power would

have to be used; the point is to realise that we do or may possess it, and to retain it in full efficiency. It follows, therefore, that independently of questions of pure home defence, to be dealt with hereafter, the sort of army which we require to maintain is one that is limited in numbers by the conditions of sea transport, that is complete in all its parts, one that is rather efficient for its numbers than dependent on numbers for its strength.

That which the power of the sea confers on us is the facility for striking a rapid blow at an unknown point. In speaking of the case of France and Italy, I mentioned that it has been computed that France could probably embark four army corps, or about 120,000 men. It might perhaps seem that we, with our far greater mercantile marine and our great facilities for embarkation, ought, if we possessed them, to be able to embark an even larger body of men. But the cases are not analogous. France, for the purposes of a movement into Italy, need only, from the shortness of the voyage, embark the troops themselves, or little more. We, for almost any point where it would be at all probable that we should have to disembark troops, should have to send with them large means of transport on shore, and the food and supplies for a comparatively long voyage for both men and animals.

On the whole, therefore, though the subject is one that it is difficult to work out with certainty, it is probably true that even if we were able to have in England as large an army as we pleased, we should secure all that we could possibly want in order to take full advantage of our naval power, if, after we have

filled up the regiments in India to their full establishment, we are able to embark two army corps, including a cavalry division, and to follow them with a third. By a slow but silent and steady progress, we have now arrived at a position at which we are able to do this faster than transports can be made ready for the required troops. Considering that we had no previous arrangements for making up an army in a condition to take the field, great advance has lately been made. Large storehouses have been built at various stations, in which the equipment for war service is placed in a fair condition of readiness.

Much still requires to be done in the organisation of these, even where they are fairly ready, but progress is steady if slow in this respect, and it is certain that more has been done the last few years towards facing the facts of what would be required for war than in any previous period of our history.

The difficulty, however, here as elsewhere, in having things put on a proper footing in this respect, lies with you, my readers of this series. No Chancellor of the Exchequer can sanction the expenditure which is necessary for this purpose without your intelligent and active support. If you think that the troops that you see marching past you on a parade at Aldershot or elsewhere constitute by themselves and as they there stand an army fit for fighting purposes in the field, and are content with what you see, all attempt to do more appears to be a wasteful expenditure which it would be dangerous for any Government to attempt. Yet surely it is not very difficult for you to understand that when a body of men, who have stomachs, and have also arms

in their hands, and have a certain number of artillery, are landed in a hostile country where they will not necessarily find food, and will certainly not be provided by their enemy with ammunition either for the artillery or the infantry, there must be some means of providing them with both.

Furthermore, if they land at a distant port, it is not enough that large stores of food and of ammunition should be carried to that port, it is necessary also that there should be some means of transporting it from the port to the successive places that the army may reach in the course of its march. Nor is it enough that the general stores of the army shall be transported from the port at which they disembark to such a distance from it as the army on any particular day has reached. An army of even 70,000 men, small as it is as compared with the great forces which are moved on the Continent, occupies a very considerable area of ground. The food and the necessary ammunition must, on a regulated system, well thought out and understood beforehand, be distributed from the central point, wherever it may be, to the several parts of the army so as ultimately to reach the particular man who needs to be fed, and to be provided with his supplies of ammunition. Furthermore, the fact of fighting implies that a certain number of men will be wounded. It is necessary that arrangements shall be made to provide such men with ambulances to remove them, and with medical attendants to look after them. In every campaign, no matter where it may be conducted, the strain and exposure which are the necessary result of military operations cause very many more men to fall sick than are actually wounded by the enemy.

Often campaigns have to be conducted through very unwholesome districts. These throw an especial strain upon the resources of the medical department. For all these purposes ordnance, commissariat, and medical transport has to be provided. Sometimes an army is able to seize upon a line of railway, or a canal, or a river, which greatly facilitates the transport of the general stores of the army. In fact it very commonly happens that the whole course of a campaign is determined by the facilities which are presented in this respect by some particular line of movement. Thus during the campaign of '82 in Egypt, the existence of the Freshwater Canal and an adjacent line of railway mainly determined the line which was chosen for the expedition. During the campaign for the relief of Gordon it was the facilities for transport presented by the Nile which made it certainly quicker to pass by that route, long as it was, rather than by the much shorter movement across the desert. In many cases, however, as for instance in the Abyssinian campaign or in our campaigns in Afghanistan, no such facilities exist. As is illustrated by these different instances, the circumstances of our campaigns vary so much that it is not possible for a British army, as it is possible for a German or a French army, completely to organise all the transport that it would require for some possible future campaign.

In some cases we require canals, in others, as in the Ashantee campaigns, we can only depend upon porterage by men, or, not to do injustice to the best porters in that country, by women. In others, mules or cattle drawing large waggons form the regular local transport,

that which it is therefore most convenient to use. Obviously, where canals or rivers are the mode of transport, some form of boat service suitable to the particular case has to be employed. All the more necessary is it that we, who cannot completely work out our transport system as Continental nations can, should have that part of the transport which actually accompanies the army itself as completely ready as possible. We require a well-organised department ready to meet any emergencies that may arise. We require to know where to lay our hands upon the number of horses which we shall certainly require, and upon the mules and other animals which we may require, and to have ready suitable carts and waggons such as must be with an army for the immediate distribution of ammunition and food to its different parts. Moreover, finally, it is a familiar fact to every householder in Britain that clothes, and especially boots and shoes, do not last for ever, and it is not surprising that under conditions of continual exposure and constant marching they have a tendency to wear out very rapidly. Supplies of these, therefore, and transport for them must necessarily be provided for any army that is to be ready for war.

All these different stores require to be transported with an army in the field, but the circumstances attending their transport are very different. The clothing, boots and shoes, for instance, need only be sent to a central spot and thence sent up as they are required for distribution at longer or shorter intervals.

The food and a certain proportion of the medical attendance and stores have to be available from day to day, as well as the forage for animals. There are

certain circumstances connected with the arrangements for the supply of these which it will be necessary to explain a little more fully presently, but at the moment I am anxious to draw a distinction between them all and the supply of ammunition both for infantry and artillery which is an integral part of the fighting force of the army in the field. As with the other stores so with the ammunition, a large proportion requires only to be available at what is known as the base of operations, such as was, for instance, Ismailia during the Tel-el-Kebir campaign. The base is usually, for our expeditions beyond seas, the port at which the debarkation takes place. From the base the supplies of ammunition have usually to be sent forward to some more advanced point where it may still be stored in large quantities. Subsequently, however, from some point, as little distant from the army as possible, at the time that it takes the field, the ammunition must be sent on in vehicles which can be transported along such means of communication as the country possesses. In the final stages it must be placed in regularly organised bodies which can follow at close distance the movements of the infantry and artillery in the field. It is scarcely possible to give a better idea of the work that has been done of late years in order to bring our army into the condition of a fighting force for the field as compared with a body of troops merely available for a spectators' review, than by stating the fact, that in the year 1893, for the first time, organised bodies in the form of ammunition trains were practised at Aldershot in the arrangements for supplying troops in fighting formation with the ammunition they will require. In passing I cannot omit to

press home the point that again this is a question of the Treasury as representative of the taxpayer and pre-eminently of those to whom this series is addressed. You have absolutely no interest whatsoever in possessing a body that will look very pretty on parade. You have the deadliest interest in possessing an army available at once to take the field under conditions which make it efficient for fighting purposes, whether at home or abroad. Probably no reader of this series is unfamiliar with the fact that the introduction of the breechloader and the magazine rifle for infantry has enormously increased the necessity for an adequate supply of ammunition in the field, and that similarly the developments that have taken place in artillery make the organisation of supply of ammunition to it a matter of vital moment. But the difficulty of our conditions is that these things which are necessary to the efficiency of an army do not show as increasing the actual numerical force of regiments and batteries. There is therefore always the most tremendous temptation for a Minister speaking to the representatives of those who do not concern themselves with these questions to leave these vital matters on one side as unnecessary expenses. The greatest credit therefore is due to those who, in the teeth of such obstacles, have established the necessity for having these questions worked out.

In regard to the supply of food, there is usually a considerable difference between the conditions under which it can be provided for a German army moving through France, or a French army moving through Germany, and those which obtain for almost all our British campaigns. With us it almost always happens,

as in Abyssinia, in Egypt, and elsewhere, that the greater part of our supplies of food have to be sent up from the base. During the Nile campaign certain purchases of corn and of cattle could be made in the country. These were, however, small in proportion to the quantities that had to be sent up over nearly the whole distance that was traversed. With regard to this matter there is a point of great importance which I am very anxious that the readers of this series should clearly understand. Taking them as representatives of the British people, their misunderstanding of it in every campaign has tended to do such injury to Britain that I do not think that one ought to omit any opportunity of pressing home the point. Perhaps it is easiest to explain the subject thus:—Suppose that I have at a given spot transport sufficient to carry the food and forage required for the men and animals of a force of 10,000 men for four days. Suppose that I move the 10,000 men two days' march forwards, and attempt to supply them in that position. Those 10,000 men, if they are dependent upon the food to be carried by my transport, would soon be short of supplies. For the transport, after moving with them for two days, will take two days to come back to fetch fresh supplies, and two more to get back again to the troops, so that it will be only on the sixth day that fresh food will arrive, and the troops will for two days be without food. In this statement I am making no allowance for the food required by the men and animals of the transport itself. That, however, is in itself a very serious matter, for, in addition to the food for the troops during those six days, food and forage will be required for the men and

animals that are carrying the supplies to the front. Therefore, even if the army were provided sufficiently to live till the first supply reached them, they would on the second occasion receive only supplies less what had already been eaten up by the transport. At the best the army could not advance another day's march, three days in all from the base, without actual starvation, because it would take the transport six days to get back to the base and to bring up the fresh supplies. How am I to arrange so that, with this amount of transport, I can enable the army to advance at all? There is only one way. If I keep the whole 10,000 men at the base, or if necessary employ a few men to protect the advance of the transport to a point a few marches ahead, then gradually I can accumulate there as many days' supplies as I please, whilst the force is being comfortably fed from ships at the base. When I have made my accumulation at a given point I can, with only the loss of what is required to feed the transport, transfer it to a yet more distant point farther forward. The fewer men I am able to employ for the protection of this movement at the front, the less of my transported stores will they eat up; the more rapid, therefore, will be my accumulation. When I have, sufficiently near to the front and along the line by which the army will advance, accumulated enough supplies of food and ammunition, then I can with safety and rapidity push forward the 10,000 men, who, if they had been prematurely advanced, would have eaten up the supplies on which my movement depends.

Thus, during the earlier stages of one of our distant campaigns, that which hastens and facilitates movement

is not the pushing forward prematurely of the bulk of the fighting force, but, on the contrary, the keeping of it back until everything is ready for its rapid advance. This is true of all cases in which the greater part of the food and ammunition have to be brought up from a ship-supplied base, through a country which furnishes few or no resources for an army. The difficulty lies in this, that the public at home during all the time that this process is going on receives innumerable letters from correspondents on the spot, more by far from officers of the army who do not understand the situation than from any one else, in which complaints are made as to the absurd delay which is taking place in the movements of the army, and as to the dilatoriness of the commander-in-chief and his staff. Zealous officers, whose feelings are very soon communicated to their men and to the friends of both of them at home, eager to get to the front, chafe at the delay. Ministers, who do not in the least understand the situation, have to answer questions about it in the House of Commons. There never has been yet one campaign of this description beyond seas in which pressure of this kind of the most dangerous character has not been brought to bear upon the commander-in-chief in the field. Not all the Duke of Wellington's victories saved him from it. Naturally, therefore, all lesser men suffer far more. As, therefore, the matter is an exceedingly simple one, as it practically amounts to this, that you must arrange for the provision of food and ammunition, in a country where they do not exist, before you send forward the men who are to eat up the food and employ the ammunition, you, my dear sir, would be doing a great service to your country if

you would first thoroughly understand it, and then, when that happens, which as surely as the sun rises will happen during the next campaign we have beyond seas, when every newspaper teems with the folly of which I speak, if you would either yourself point out its mischief and absurdity, its lack of common sense, and its hopelessly unpatriotic character, or else induce some one else who can make their words sting like a lash or burn like a hot iron to do so, you will merit the thanks of all loyal Britishers.

Perhaps I could hardly have taken a better illustration than this fact supplies, of the importance of the whole question of transport, and of the value to us of a properly organised transport corps, such as we are now within fair prospect of possessing.

Thus much, then, I have endeavoured to show, that the army we need is one which must be so worked that whatever is done for it shall tend to make it complete and efficient for war in all its parts, and that those portions of an army, which do not merely swell the pomp and circumstance of a review, are often as important to us as those that do. I press this matter upon you because, whereas your interest lies wholly on the side of having for what you pay an army effective for war, complete in all its parts and ready to take the field, it is the tendency of the general public to look only to peace appearance, and to give no credit for those steps which are taken for war efficiency. It is this fact which makes it difficult to get what is wanted in these matters. That leads me to the next point, on which I am anxious to insist. As I have said in another connection in the last chapter, the question of what we want

for war depends on the nature of the forces that we have to oppose in war. When the great wars of the French Revolution and of Napoleon began, armies were formed for each war as they were wanted. Prussia, under Frederick the Great and his father, had gained an enormous advantage by having an army perfectly drilled during peace time—one which, therefore, relatively to all others, was ready for war manœuvring. The system was, however, slow and cumbrous. The long years of war, which followed the outbreak of the Revolution, gave ample time for the gradual formation of armies trained in the school of war—obviously the most perfect for its purpose; but even during those days the army with which Napoleon won in succession the campaigns of Ulm, Austerlitz, and Jena, owed its perfection to the relatively long peace, or virtually peace, organisation and training which it acquired in the camp at Boulogne, when it was either really or nominally, as you please to think, being trained for the invasion of Britain. Since the war of 1870, all Continental armies have for the last quarter of a century been, in a far higher degree than was the case in the camp at Boulogne, trained as armies, in all their parts, to work together as they would have to do in war. Varied ground of vast extent is each year placed at their disposal for large manœuvres on a grand scale. In Britain, solely because the people do not understand our necessities, we meet with the greatest difficulties in obtaining ground on which we can work with any approach to the efficiency which is attained by foreign officers. The Military Manœuvres Act, which was intended to give us these facilities, has been rendered impossible by parliamentary obstruction. The purchase

of adequate land at Salisbury—a meagre substitute for constant change of ground—receives only a grudging assent. Yet it is surely in your interest not to have the millions which are spent on the Army thrown away because, while all the men we may have to meet in war have a training in common, adapted to the conditions of modern war, we cannot get it. All these things in Britain depend on the free assent of the people. Abroad they are regulated by authority, as the first necessity of national protection. The free assent of our people would be readily given if they only understood the necessity; but, absorbed as they are in their own daily work, there is no means by which we can reach them and make them understand, unless you will throw yourselves into the task, and bring it home to them. The process which has been going on is one which tends everywhere to make the ground available for training men unsuited for its purpose. On the one hand, the range of weapons, both of artillery and infantry, has enormously increased, so that the nature of even minor manœuvres has necessarily been modified, in a sense requiring greatly extended areas of ground. On the other hand, the growth of population and the movement towards towns has tended to restrict the area available. Hence, almost everywhere, while greater facilities are required, fewer are attainable. Moreover, from the facts not being understood, popular feeling is continually apt to be jealous of all attempts of soldiers to learn their work. Surely it is a thing ultimately very dangerous for freedom that the despotic governments of the Continent should be able to train effectively their officers and soldiers, whilst the soldiers of a free country

cannot get permission to train themselves. None of the Continental governments are more despotic in these matters than the Republic of France, despite the constant changes in the personnel. It has inherited the machinery of government, devised for that very purpose by Napoleon. For my own part, I have the most complete belief in the power of the educated classes in Britain to bring home to the mass of the electorate the truth on any subject in which they will interest themselves, and to carry the electorate with them. If, therefore, I have succeeded in showing you that this matter is one vital for the work and safety of Britain, I submit to you that it lies with you to decide whether free Britain shall be able to have effective soldiers, or whether that shall be a privilege reserved for the despotisms of Europe.

Nor is it only in ground that we fail to get what is needed. Armies depend on an organisation as complete as a regiment. On the Continent army corps of 30,000 or more men live habitually in an organic relationship to one another, which with us exists only at Aldershot for bodies larger than the 700 or 800 men who compose a battalion. This is almost entirely due to civil, not military causes. The Army dispersed in isolated stations is looked on as a means for adding to the profits of the local tradesmen, and as a means of supplying shows and bands for the delectation of the neighbourhood. Nothing but a strong national feeling that the Army does not exist for these, but for quite different purposes, can overcome local prejudice and local interests. Will you not help to beget such a feeling? Whether for effective action abroad or at home, it is an organic

army that you need, not a dispersed congress of battalions.

So far I have spoken of the formation of the Army for war, and chiefly of the preparation of the Army for action, to co-operate with a triumphant Navy beyond seas. The question, however, which has next to be discussed, is whether we ought to leave the defence of these islands purely to the Navy, and whether therefore all defensive arrangements on land are superfluous. That we ought to do so is a position which has been sustained on plausible grounds rather frequently of late. It has been contended that a foreign army would never think of invading Britain, because if they succeeded in overcoming our Navy they would be able to starve us into submission, and would, therefore, never trouble themselves to risk attack upon our shores. Now, in my judgment, that mode of speaking is very like that of the Irish peasant who tells you, when a corporal and a drummer-boy have passed him, "Sure *the Army* went by, it may be ten minutes ago." "The Navy" has not been annihilated because for a time a superior force of the enemy has been concentrated in the Channel. If our Navy were once fairly swept off the face of ocean, undoubtedly our case would be hopeless. But every victory and every retreat that takes place in war does not settle the fate of a campaign, still less of a kingdom, whether it be on land or sea. Considering what the changes and chances of naval warfare are at the present moment as I discussed them in Chapter III., it certainly would seem to be almost inconceivable madness that we should run the risk of national destruction, because a few naval officers, who by no means represent the best

mind of the Navy, consider that any attempt to make our home defence forces effective on land is an insult to the Navy. I am content to know, even from the naval point of view, that the man to whom, up to the day of his death, the Navy looked as "the first tactician of his day," Sir Geoffrey Hornby, in the most public manner at a meeting of the Aldershot Tactical Society, over which he presided, declared his belief in the value and importance of the Volunteers as an element in National Defence.[1]

Mr. Thursfield, from whom I quote that most accurate description of Sir Geoffrey's position in the mind of sailors,[2] tells us that it is ridiculous to talk of invasion as a possibility against which we have to provide, because if we lost the command of the sea this problem would be presented to us, "With our mills standing, our forges silent, and furnaces cold, and our mines closed, where is the teeming industrial population of our land to find the wherewithal to buy its food? There is no arguing with an empty belly. The working man is now in the last resort the arbiter of our fate. Can any one doubt that a government, which resolved to fight on after the command of the sea had passed into the hands of our enemies, would be swept away like chaff before the wind?"

Now Mr. Thursfield has done such yeoman service in pressing forward the most certain of our needs—the creation of a supreme Navy—that I only venture to

[1] On 10th January 1893. See a publication by Gale and Polden of a lecture by Admiral P. H. Colomb on "The Command of the Sea and its Effect upon Military Operations," price 6d., with the discussion which followed.

[2] *The Navy and the Nation* (1897), p. 68.

differ from him, cap in hand, and with the utmost respect; but I think that his most valuable zeal for the Navy has blinded him to some considerations which were very clear to two men for whom he has expressed the most profound admiration—Sir Geoffrey Hornby and Sir George Tryon. In the first place, as regards coast defence, I can answer for it that at least nine years ago Sir George Tryon, in his own office at the Admiralty, explained to me the reasons why he was then pressing forward the proposal which has only this year (1897) been actually put forward by the Government for the fortification of Lough Swilly and Bear Haven. His view was that our swift ocean steamers could, with very little protection from the fleet, make those harbours, and that if they were secured havens of refuge, our supplies of food and material would come into the United Kingdom by way of the Irish railways with very great security. Moreover, the mere speculative activity which would be roused in America and Canada by any considerable rise of price in England, would tend to keep our supplies of raw material at a pretty safe level. Further, it seems to me that Mr. Thursfield asks too much of our Navy. "To lose command of the seas" is one thing. If that loss were more than temporary, it must be fatal to us. We did lose command of the seas at various times in the course of our history, notably when Van Tromp sailed up the Thames, and during the American War of Independence. It was, however, only a temporary loss, and it was not fatal to us. We also at times lost command of the Indian seas. If that loss had been more than temporary we must have lost India. As it was only temporary,

and as we gained battles on land, we did not lose India. But apart from that question, without at all losing command of the seas in the sense that when our Navy has had time to gather we may resume it everywhere, it is obvious that we may be strong enough on the whole and yet at a given moment not strong enough at the precise point required. To quote again an authority he respects: "Considerations of defence naturally involve an estimate of what they are to be prepared against. History is apt to repeat itself; squadrons and fleets have escaped the most vigilant admirals, and the most skilful strategists failed in days of old so to order our fleets as to prevent this. Since those days the composition of the navies of the world has greatly altered, and at this time it is far easier for an admiral to avoid notice and conceal destination."[1] Further, for my own part I am old enough—I believe Mr. Thursfield is so also—to remember the behaviour of our Lancashire operatives during the war between North and South America. I absolutely refuse to assume that the noble sacrifices which the men then made rather than in any way contribute to the slavery of blacks would not be made by them for the sake of the freedom of their own country. We had in those days plenty of "mills standing, forges silent, furnaces cold," plenty of "empty bellies," but the argument of freedom was heard then, and I have no sort of doubt that it would be heard again if their own land were threatened.

Sir George Clarke has, however, in another article in the same volume[2] elaborated a different argument. He

[1] *Life of Sir George Tryon*, p. 212.

[2] *The Navy and the Nation*, article "Can England be Invaded?"

takes the history of the past and tells us that in no case has any invasion of England been successful when the enemy has had to deal with a united nation. That is undoubtedly true, because whenever a united nation has been threatened by an invader it has met him both by sea and land. Invasions have been defeated when the nation was by no means united, as for instance when Monmouth failed. He was defeated because after effecting his landing he was beaten on shore. Sir George Clarke goes far back into the history of the past, and shows that in the third century the forces of Constantius were successful in an invasion intended to restore Britain to the Roman Empire after it had been severed from it by the revolt of Carausius because, as he puts it, after Constantius had effected a landing he "found everywhere obedient servants."

In all these cases the point lay in this, that because of the previous feelings of the inhabitants there was either no armed resistance on shore or no adequate resistance after the invaders had landed. If Richard III. had defeated Richmond and killed him at Bosworth there would have been no Tudor reign, despite the fact that the fleet of Richmond had evaded that of Richard. On the other hand, during all the periods of our history when we have most successfully met our enemies at sea, our ancestors invariably prepared also to meet them on land because they were a united people. The most famous picture connected with the times of the Armada is that of Queen Elizabeth reviewing her *troops* at Tilbury. During the threat of Napoleon at Boulogne we trusted in our Navy, and had good reason to do so, but for all that the Government elaborated plans of national defence

on shore in the most complete manner. I have now in my hands Moore's orders for the steps to be taken on the landing of the French army, and further, an elaborate discussion of the Government proposal to adopt the method afterwards carried out in Portugal by Wellington of clearing the country of supplies in front of the enemy. In no sense did this imply that we were slack in our naval preparation. I cannot think that Mr. Thursfield disposes of the Armada illustration by scolding Queen Elizabeth. Elizabeth sinned in that she did not provide adequately for the needs of her Navy, not in evoking a national spirit which, while it expressed itself first in the personal zeal by which the Navy was inflamed, could not be content with that alone, but made each man anxious to play his part in the national defence. It seems to me that to portion off the work of Navy and Army by speaking of the Navy as the one defence of Britain and of the Army as its means of offence, is to confuse both statements. The Navy is the right arm of Britain, the Army its left arm; both are needed alike in offence and defence. If India is in any sense a "gift of the Sea Power," that surely is a pretty heavy offensive stroke delivered by the Navy. Yet exactly in the same sense and in no other in which India is a "gift of the Sea Power," Canada, South Africa, and all our colonies are "gifts of the Sea Power." Yet, as Sir George Clarke truly says, no one of these was actually conquered by the Navy alone. "The British Army has fought in every land, from China to South America, from the Himalayas to South Africa and New Zealand. It has a long and brilliant record of operations all carried on beyond the naval frontier. It has conquered for us an empire

greater than that of Rome. It has been almost continuously employed on active service throughout this century." And as both Navy, Army, and Mercantile Marine have been needed for those operations which have given us this vast dominion, so both Navy and Army have been needed for the security of home defence. In our offensive operations the Navy has stood behind the Army; often, as Mr. Thursfield has admirably shown in the case of the Crimean War, doing its most valuable and important work for us when that work was so complete and triumphant that it hardly attracted the attention of the public at all. So, similarly, in defence it is the rôle of the Army to stand behind the Navy. What Sir George Clarke appears to put as an hypothesis of the right mode of our defence—"naval supremacy and the maintenance of a home army able to oppose any force that could possibly be landed on the shores of England"—exactly sums up what I believe to be our true defence, and it is, as I think, established by the long catena of historical deductions which he has drawn out in his article "Can England be Invaded?" but then if that is true, the Navy is no more the sole defence of Britain than the Army is its sole means of offence. What we need is a supreme Navy and an Army adequate to fulfil those duties which remain to be done for the strength of the kingdom by help of a supreme Navy. In both questions of offence and defence it is necessary that each should free the other for delivering that kind of blow from the shoulder which is the only true defence. The Army when employed beyond seas relies securely on the Navy that it shall not be disturbed in its active operations by any fear of interruption of its

communications with home. It would be a terrible thing if the Navy had to hang trembling about these islands, deprived of the opportunity of concentrating for some decisive action, lest an unarmed and helpless population should fall a victim to some foreigner who took advantage of their temporary absence to attempt to throw an army on our shores. I cannot therefore admit that "the only conditions which could render invasion practicable, would at the same time imply that the vital communications of the Empire were in the hands of an enemy, that India and every colony lay open to attack in any force, that trade was paralysed, and that the means of existence of the home population were destroyed."

If "the sea" (p. 327 [1]) "is no impossible barrier," the stake is too great to allow us to rest comfortably on the thesis that "in war it is reasonable probabilities, not possibilities, which must be taken into consideration." We want to make the invasion of Britain impossible, not improbable, or at least to omit no precaution that can tend to that result. We can, so far as human foresight can go, attain that end by having in addition to a supreme Navy a home defence adequate to meet a force larger than any that could venture on our shores during a momentary collapse of local naval strength such as no human skill can prevent in any affairs. In war it is a maxim, applicable alike to naval and to military affairs, that he is the greatest leader who makes the fewest mistakes. It is not those who have been actually charged with the enormous responsibilities involved in the command of great fleets who wish to have thrown on their

[1] *The Navy and the Nation*, by Lieut.-Col. Sir George Clarke and James R. Thursfield, M.A.

shoulders the awful duty of protecting a helpless and unarmed kingdom. It is the mere professional Chauvinists from whom Mr. Thursfield and Sir George Clarke have learned to talk in this way.

That, however, leads me to a point of modern naval strategy, the authorities for which Mr. Thursfield has evidently not known, and the nature of which he has altogether misapprehended. It represents an extremely important point in the question of the possibilities of invasion. As I noticed in a previous chapter, the conditions under which our Navy during the great war met that of France were, owing to the effect of the Revolution in destroying the efficiency of the French navy, so exceptional, that from almost the commencement we asserted over them a superiority which enabled us after a time to shut them up in harbour and there blockade them. So shut up, they lost all practice at sea, and became more and more incapable of meeting our fleets. Admiral Colomb has admirably shown that no security for our whole Empire can approach that which is conferred by a condition in which we are able thus virtually to close all the harbours of a hostile coast. The question therefore is one of supreme importance whether the modern conditions of war, the existence of land telegraphs and the substitution of steam for sails, has tended to make this blockade process easier or more difficult for us. Mr. Thursfield has himself in his article on "The Naval Manœuvres and their Lessons" very well shown that the process is more difficult and requires a larger force for this reason, that the outlying fleet engaged in the blockade has now to exercise incessant vigilance. In former days blockaded ships could only

escape when the wind was favourable. Therefore it was always possible to know when to expect escape. Now that the blockaded ships are independent of wind, the ships which blockade them can never rest for a moment; and during the manœuvres of 1888 the exhaustion of officers and men from the exercise of this incessant vigilance became so great that the two fleets which were engaged in the blockade of Lough Swilly and Bear Haven were scarcely from this cause alone able to maintain their watch during a period when the blockaded fleets were under the orders of the Admiralty only allowed to demonstrate, and were not attempting escape at all. The two blockades had from this one cause alone all but broken down at the moment when, for the first time, Sir George Tryon was set free to attempt escape. So much is agreed on all hands. Another very important point is still in dispute. As a matter of fact, during those manœuvres, on the first night that Sir George Tryon was free, he by a telegraphic order to his subordinate Admiral Fitzroy at Lough Swilly, being himself at Bear Haven, directed that two ships should endeavour to make their escape from that harbour, and he assigned a point in latitude and longitude to which he directed them to repair, in order that they might there effect a concentration with three ships with which he designed to break the blockade at Bear Haven. Further, it is a fact that all the ships from Bear Haven and Lough Swilly did make good their escape, and did, without difficulty, effect their concentration at the assigned point. The question is, what deductions ought to be drawn from these facts. That the authorities on both sides may be fairly stated, I will

first of all give what Mr. Thursfield, no doubt after consultation with some naval officers, writes: "There are those who maintain that a blockade is impracticable in modern conditions of naval warfare; and they are probably at least so far right, that it is impossible so closely to blockade a port as completely to prevent the occasional and clandestine escape of individual ships. But a blockade at best is only a means to an end; the end being to bring the enemy to an action, or to nullify the strategic value of his force so long as he declines to fight. So long as that end is attained, therefore, the blockade is effectual for its purpose notwithstanding the occasional and clandestine escape of individual ships. Only two courses are open to ships which thus break the blockade: either to engage individually in a *guerre de course*, a campaign of commerce-destroying, or as some ingenious strategists have suggested, to proceed forthwith to some preconcerted rendezvous, there to constitute an organised fleet capable of acting on the offensive. Now a *guerre de course* is always a vexatious incident of naval warfare, and often a very costly one to the naval power attacked. But it has never yet sufficed by itself to determine the broad strategic issues of maritime conflict; and, according to Captain Mahan, it never can. It is even doubtful whether in these days of swift steam navigation it is likely to be so destructive as it was in the old sailing days. It is quite certain that it will never overthrow the strategic supremacy of a Power which holds the command of the sea; that can only be done by the suppression of the organised naval force, strategically distributed in sea-going fleets, which constitutes and embodies that supremacy. On the other

hand, the enterprise of forming ships which have broken the blockade into an organised fleet capable of acting on the offensive is necessarily exposed to many hazards and perils. It amounts at best to a redistribution, not to an augmentation of existing naval force, and the strategic answer to it is a corresponding redistribution of the forces of the superior adversary. That may or may not be successful in the immediate issue; it can hardly fail in the long run. Evasion on a large scale may frustrate the purpose of a series of blockades, and compel the blockading fleets to concentrate. But command of the sea cannot be wrested from a superior naval power by evasion, it can only be won by fighting. The idea that the evading fleet can engage in independent "territorial enterprise of serious moment is purely chimerical; the 'fleet in being' forbids it. With a superior force at its heels or on its track, fugitive raids are the utmost limit of its offensive capacity, and fugitive raids are of little or no strategic moment."

Furthermore I must admit that, not a little to my surprise, Admiral Colomb, in a recent discussion at the United Service Institution, stated that "the weight of naval opinion" was against the effect of such action as Sir George Tryon used in showing the extreme difficulties which now lie in the way of blockade as compared with former times. I have never seen anywhere the statement with which Mr. Thursfield begins the passage I have quoted. I do not know who they are who maintain that a blockade is *impracticable* under modern conditions; but as I am tolerably sure, for reasons that I shall presently give, that the "ingenious strategists" whom he so contemptuously dismisses are a paraphrase

or a multiplication, as he supposes, of my very humble self, it is of some importance that I should show that he has to reckon not with me but with the very admirals for whom he has the most profound respect. I should imagine that on any subject on which Sir George Tryon and Sir Geoffrey Hornby were completely in agreement Mr. Thursfield would prefer, as I should, to be wrong with them rather than to be right even with Admiral Colomb. It happens that that is the case in the present instance. It is very natural that that should not be obvious to Mr. Thursfield, because the statement of the changed conditions of blockade first appeared in two articles written by me, the first of which having been anonymous may be ignored. The second appeared with my name in the *Contemporary Review* of October 1889. It was perhaps hardly fair to critics that that should have been the case. They naturally looked upon it as an impertinent intrusion of mine into questions of naval strategy. They could not know the basis on which it rested. I had, in fact, been a guest on board one of the ships which was with Sir George Tryon throughout the naval manœuvres of 1888, and the facts which had passed under my eyes having seemed to me exceedingly interesting, I had ventured on an anonymous account of them which was by all the critics taken to be the work of a naval officer. Sir George Tryon, however, who had, as his custom was, most hospitably entertained me during the year 1888, detected my hand, and so entirely approved of and agreed with the deductions which I had ventured to draw from what I had narrated, that in the following year he invited me to go with him as his guest, and

showed me, day by day, exactly what he was going to do and why he was going to do it before he issued his orders. Under his pressure and that of some other naval friends I then prepared an article in which the thesis in regard to blockade, which Mr. Thursfield, though he does not state it correctly, intends to assail in the passage I have quoted, was fully set forth. The proofs were carefully gone over by Sir George Tryon and approved by him. As soon as the article appeared in the *Contemporary* Sir Geoffrey Hornby wrote to me a letter which began, "I think I and every naval officer owes you a debt of gratitude for your article," and went on to express his acceptance of the conclusions established in it. But that was not all. Admiral Colomb, not being content to accept what he supposed to be my deductions, proposed to the Aldershot Tactical Society that he should deliver a lecture on the subject, and that Admiral Hornby should be invited to take the chair. He most courteously sent me an invitation to be present and to answer him if I could. The meeting duly came off on 10th January 1893. After we had both stated our cases, Sir Geoffrey summed up, as Admiral Colomb himself admitted, and as I, of course, knew beforehand would be the case, wholly and without stint in my favour, declaring that Sir George Tryon had shown the truth of the propositions I had advanced as to the advantage conferred on blockaded ships by the new conditions of electric light, steam and land telegraphs.[1] What then are the conditions which, if

[1] The shorthand writer's too brief account of this very valuable speech scarcely does justice to the definiteness of Sir Geoffrey's statement. As I went into the room Admiral Colomb met me

Sir Geoffrey Hornby and Sir George Tryon are naval authorities hardly to be impeached, were illustrated by the naval manœuvres of 1888 so convincingly that, as far as any principle can be determined prior to actual war, this ought to be reckoned with as an important element in future naval warfare? I have already stated the facts up to the moment when, under Sir George Tryon's order, conveyed by land telegraph, a fleet, combined from ships which had escaped from Lough Swilly and Bear Haven, effected a rendezvous at a point assigned them in latitude and longitude. As a matter of further fact in this instance, Sir George Tryon sent this little fleet on a *guerre de course* round the north of Scotland to attack various English towns and harbours on the east coast. Sir George was certainly not unwilling to read England and Scotland a lesson as to the defenceless condition of their commercial harbours and coast-towns, the application of which is to be found in the principles he laid down when in Australia for the defence of the colonial harbours. No one, however, more fully than Sir Geoffrey Hornby and Sir George Tryon agreed with Captain Mahan and Admiral Colomb in disbelieving in the decisive effect of a *guerre de course*. The point in the concentration of the fleet under Admiral Fitzroy was altogether other than that. The point was that it broke *both* blockades. Mr. Thursfield misses it altogether when he says that the formation of such a fleet "amounts, at best, to a redistribution, not to augmentation, of existing naval force." It is quite true that "command of the sea cannot be wrested from a superior

with the words, "You are all right, for Sir Geoffrey agrees with you," and that agreement was certainly publicly stated at the time.

naval power by evasion, it can only be won by fighting"; but distribution makes all the difference as to the fighting. If the "superior naval power" has a hundred ships of equal value to ninety of an inferior naval power, but the inferior naval power is able to bring into the first great naval engagement thirty ships against twenty of the superior naval power's, then, other conditions being equal, the twenty ships will be certainly defeated, and if circumstances favour that result, as at Trafalgar or the Nile, the twenty will most of them be destroyed or captured, while the thirty will only require to refit in order, with the ships they have captured, to form a new fleet equal or superior to that which the thirty formed before the engagement. Now, what Sir Geoffrey Hornby and Sir George Tryon foresaw was this, that if instead of there being only two harbours comparatively near to one another, like those of Lough Swilly and Bear Haven, there was a long line of many harbours to be closed, the ends of which might be hundreds of miles apart, then if the exterior fleet was formed by the evasion of many ships from blockaded ports, it might attain a superiority to the blockading fleet at, at least, some one of the blockaded harbours. Obviously, if that were so, by making direct for that harbour before its concentration and direction were known, the newly-formed fleet might engage the blockading squadron, and, by ensuring the co-operation of its own fleet within the harbour, might destroy or capture it. It was this danger which, after the evasion of Sir George Tryon's ships, hung over Admiral Baird's blockading squadrons at either port. It was merely in order to avoid all risk from the operation of the "rules

for the manœuvres" that Sir George Tryon preferred to allow Admiral Fitzroy's fleet for a time to vanish into some unknown region, thereby threatening both blockading squadrons alike, raising both blockades, throwing Baird on to a rather helpless defensive, and gaining for himself, though still in command of the inferior fleet, the enormous advantage of the initiative. It is all very well to say that these were only naval manœuvres. The point is to show in what respect, for these purposes, the facts would have been changed had the conditions been those of war. Sir Geoffrey Hornby, at all events, expressly used the term that Sir George Tryon had *demonstrated*[1] these facts. I think most of my countrymen, I almost hope to include Mr. Thursfield himself, will be certain, at least so far, to accept his conclusion against all comers, as to agree that any precautions for the safety of Britain, which are made necessary by the chance that two men like Sir George Tryon and Sir Geoffrey Hornby may be right and Mr. Thursfield wrong, ought to be taken, more especially as Mr. Thursfield has shown clearly that he does not appreciate the reasoning on which they relied. It may perhaps be consoling to him if he will consider that the concentrated fleet of evaders from blockaded ports becomes a "fleet in being," in presence of which such an operation as the blockading of a squadron at all even approximately equal to the blockaders becomes a very risky operation indeed. Nor does he offer us a satisfactory solution in saying that all that is required is a redistribution of the blockaders. That implies the

[1] As I remember his expression; "shown" as it is quoted by the shorthand writer.

entire abandonment, at least for the time, of the whole system of blockade. Seeing that his friend Admiral Colomb has insisted that only by an effective blockade of the enemy's coasts can our fleet adequately fulfil its mission, that is a rather important result from his own point of view. The true deduction, however, is not that a general blockade is impossible, but that to meet the case a fleet is required adequate to carry out the necessary conditions of blockade under the very difficult circumstances which Mr. Thursfield has so well shown to be involved in the constant relief of ships, necessary because of the fatigue to officers and men entailed by the incessant vigilance required for watching blockaded steamers, and that in addition there should be a free fleet adequate to deal with any blockade-runners that may attempt to concentrate in order either to raise the blockade or do other mischief. Further, the additional element of uncertainty which is introduced by the possibilities involved in these difficulties of modern blockade, as compared with that of the period of the great war, is a further reason why we should have for home defence an adequate Army as well as a supreme Navy.

The arrival of Captain Mahan's *Life of Nelson*, as I am returning these pages to press, makes it right that I should introduce another question of great importance, on which I should have hesitated to say anything without the almost unanswerable authority which Captain Mahan draws from Nelson's words and practice. Mr. Thursfield and others have accepted from Admiral Colomb a view of a certain naval event in the reign of William III. which involves principles applicable to our

own time, the truth or falsehood of which is of importance as a question of the possibility of invasion, and as at least one of the elements that have to be dealt with in considering whether a land defence is or is not a proper supplement to the naval defence of these islands. Torrington, whose fleet was beaten by the French fleet in 1690, was severely dealt with at the time by William's Government. He is by these writers treated as the one great naval authority of his time, because he believed that if he kept his fleet intact, the fact that he so preserved it would make it impossible for a superior French fleet to cover the transportation of a hostile army to the shores of Britain. He believed, as he expressed it, that a "fleet in being," though inferior, would prevent by the mere fact of its presence any superior fleet from attempting to cover invasion. Now, in order to define the point at issue, it is necessary to make clear what is and what is not in dispute. There is no question whatever that a fleet which has to cover the movement of a number of transports is at great disadvantage as compared with a fleet which is free from these encumbrances. Therefore, if a fleet is able to keep itself intact for the moment when a superior fleet is involved in the difficult operation of escorting transports, and can then attack it, there is no doubt that as a naval question the inferior attacking fleet chooses in doing so a very favourable chance for itself. Moreover it is true also that ordinarily the most favourable moment for attack will be the time when the transports and troops are committed to the attempt to effect their landing, and when the covering navy is engaged in supporting and assisting the movement. The only question in dispute is whether, granting these

advantages which thus fall to the inferior fleet, they are so overwhelming that practically they make it certain that the superior fleet will not be able to drive off and repel the inferior fleet which declines to fight with it, and so enable the transports covered by it, perhaps assisted by such warships as can be spared, to secure for the troops a landing. I put this so because, in order to sustain the contention for which Admiral Colomb, and still more Mr. Thursfield and others who follow Admiral Colomb, cite the case of Torrington, this is necessary to them. Now the importance of the question for us lies in this, that if their contention be true, then even if our Navy be temporarily inferior in the Channel, it would be impossible for a foreign invasion to take place as long as we had an inferior "fleet in being" here. Furthermore, their contention is that if that did happen, the correct policy for our fleet would be to follow Torrington's theory and not engage the French fleet, but preserve their own ships intact as a threat against an attempt at landing. Torrington when he fought at Beachy Head did so under protest and against his judgment. Now it is not too much to say that against all these theories in a bunch Captain Mahan, in his noble *Life of Nelson*, in my judgment one of the very greatest books from every point of view that have appeared in our time, flings himself and Nelson. He shows distinctly in case after case and on page after page that Nelson's theory and practice was directly in opposition to every one of them. He recurs to the point again and again, even before he comes to the question of the chase of Villeneuve. He says distinctly (p. 137, vol. i.) that in Tourville's place in 1690 Nelson would not have been

stopped from moving French troops across the Channel because of Torrington's "fleet in being." He shows as distinctly, both in the description of the Villeneuve chase and in case after case in the Mediterranean, that Nelson would not have acted as Torrington wished to do and in part did, but that he would have engaged the French fleet in order to cripple it. Never was there such clear, straight, well-defined antagonism—not Mahan's only, it is only forced on him by historical veracity, but Nelson's —to every one of these theories of Admiral Colomb's. It is clear that on Mary's Council Nelson would have voted with those who condemned Torrington. I think I am not the only reader hitherto silent who has been bored to death with this phantom "fleet in being" which has occupied such reams of print. Pray heaven that Mahan may have sent it to the bottom never to rise again!

On the naval side, therefore, that particular argument which treats the danger of invasion as not to be reckoned with because, even if we for a time lost command of the Channel, we should still have there a "fleet in being," which would without fighting prevent invasion, has received so severe a blow, that of this as of some others one may at least say that it no longer affords us such security as to make it patriotic to omit other precautions, lest haply Mahan and Nelson should be right and Colomb and Thursfield wrong.

On the military side of the question, moreover, there is a further circumstance which, under modern conditions of war, greatly facilitates *sudden* invasion. Napoleon in 1803–1804, in order to be ready to embark an army, necessarily concentrated it before doing so in the camp of Boulogne. But, supposing an army sufficiently

practised in the work of rapid embarkation is dispersed at different railway stations, its accumulation at the point of embarkation will be all the quicker if it is able to move from these part by part, so as to secure a continuous succession of arriving trains. The difficulty and delay in the movement of troops by rail depends on the time required for entraining and detraining, and the more stations we can use for these at the same time the quicker can we get the troops off. Therefore, if Napoleon were now contemplating the invasion of Britain, he would certainly not collect an army at a point immediately opposite our shores, thus both giving us notice of his intention and indicating the ports that required watching. On the contrary, having first taken care to select well-organised corps for the purpose, he would practise them at their own stations on shore in the interior of France in the work of embarking and disembarking. That is naturally easily done, because a ship at the time of embarkation in dock is simply an annex to the land, and the conditions can be closely imitated on shore. He would then, shortly before the time he contemplated invasion, and when everything had been done to make it appear that it was the last thing he thought of, disperse the intended force to such stations in the interior of France as had the most convenient railway communication with the port or ports he intended to use. His chief previous preparation, other than naval, would have consisted in providing within the port or ports large sidings and platforms running close to the docks and connected with as many independent railways as possible. The telegraph would give ample notice of the moment when the troops should

arrive to occupy the innocent shipping that had previously been lying without offence in the docks. Obviously, if possible, he would make a Peace of Amiens in order to be able to strike on some sudden pretext, either actually before declaration or immediately after. All the preparations I have indicated could be made without attracting the least attention. They would be, some of them, mere matters of local drill, others of commercial development. If his intention to act elsewhere on the outbreak of war could be well announced and strongly indicated, he could at least make all his arrangements for obtaining a naval superiority temporarily in the Channel without being hampered by the advertisement of his intention supplied by the concentrated camp of soldiers. Taking all these facts together with the other points I have discussed, there is not the smallest reason why we should modify the general principles of our development of armed force. The Army does not need to be a conscripted army, it needs only to be adequate to furnish the nucleus of home defence and the largest available force for beyond sea operations, with the support of the supreme Navy. There is every reason why both Navy and Army should heartily co-operate with full understanding of one another's capacities and needs. There is every reason why our administrators and the public, without whose support our administrators cannot act, should understand these things also.

I do not think that it would be useful for the purpose of this series if, having endeavoured to establish the facts that we require two conditions, so far as the Army is concerned, one a highly effective mobile force, complete in all its parts, and available for employment

beyond seas, and that we require an adequate land defence, I were to enter into details of what is required for the latter purpose. It seems to me that the whole discussion shows clearly that we should abandon all the advantages of our position if we adopted as the method of home defence Lord Wemyss' proposal for a universal service system for that purpose. It would be to treat the defence of Britain as if Britain were Switzerland, a land dominion, not an island set in the silver sea and only the nucleus of a great sea domain. On the other hand, I do think that it would be well if we could devote our energies, without carping criticism from those who realise the importance of our Navy as a defensive force, to perfecting our ancient constitutional force, the Militia, which has lately shown itself so effectively at Aldershot, and is so anxious to be seriously dealt with. Further, far from thinking that the Volunteers "take themselves too seriously," I should like to see them take themselves much more seriously than many of them do. I wish we could have put into the hands of the Volunteer Artillery an effective field weapon, and that generally the whole question of the provision of an adequate force of mobile Artillery for our home defence could be taken in hand. I have always myself believed that, considering the enclosed nature of our country, and the extent to which it is everywhere interlaced by roads, the organisation on a large scale of bicycle corps of Volunteers who are good shots might be made a most effective addition and support to the small mounted force we should have available. There is no question, however, that both in regard to Militia and Volunteers the difficulty is that of getting a proper

supply of officers. The men would very soon be all right if we could get over the other trouble. Considering that but for the money difficulty the officer class is the one of which for all purposes in Britain we have the greatest plethora, and that we have an immense number of effective officers who yearly retire from the active army, it can only be a question of making the inducements adequate to get them to take up, as many have done, the work of adapting themselves to the conditions of Volunteers, of studying what they want, and supplying it. It has always seemed to me, whenever I have been with a camp of Volunteers of late years, that it is only the enormous improvement which has taken place since the movement was started that has raised a standard among them which it is much harder to reach than was the case formerly. I believe that with all the best corps, all who know them will bear this testimony. It is most cruel to tell them that because we want an effective Navy we do not want them to be effective. What is quite certain is that the Navy would lose some of its best friends if the Volunteers disappeared. The Volunteers represent the patriotism of the country, and it is only when England is in its patriotic mood that we get an effective Navy or Army either for that matter.

One word in conclusion. I am not able to imagine the principle on which a calculation is made of the Army and Navy estimates for the purposes of comparison. Both taken together, the insurance paid by the country on any calculation of its wealth is indefinitely small, but surely, in the name of common sense, the things we need are the supreme Navy and the adequate Army

worked by the "incomparable diplomacy" of Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's speech. How is it possible to arrive at any estimate of what we ought to spend on the Navy by comparing it with what we do spend on the Army, or *vice versâ*? We want a certain number of ships and men to man them. In what relation does that stand to the expenses involved in keeping up an army adequate for the defence of India, home, and the Colonies, and for taking such advantage of the supreme Navy as our mercantile marine enables us to take in order to deliver blows that will bring war to a conclusion? We have greater advantage in building ships than any country in the world. Man with us is a more costly article than in any country. All those conditions which I have sketched in Chapter IV. tend to make our Army man for man far dearer than in any other country. That must and will always be so. No possible or conceivable reform can alter it till we lose our world-wide Empire. Our Navy, as long as our shipbuilding facilities continue what they are, must and always will be ship for ship, tonnage for tonnage, and gun for gun the cheapest in the world. That must be so; only intolerable muddling could alter it. These facts must be faced if any useful result is to be secured. Moreover, these attempts at useless and mischievous comparison tend to that most dangerous competition of departments, to throw burdens on one another.

If all the coaling-stations and harbours which the Army holds, much to its individual disgust, solely for the sake of the Navy, and for no other cause whatever, were charged to the naval vote and removed from that of the Army, a very different set of figures would appear.

On the whole, for very sound Imperial reasons, and at the wish of the Admiralty, that change of tenure does not take place; but, as one who raised my voice for the Navy at a time when it was not so popular a cry as it is now, I venture to protest as an Englishman[1] against a method of discussion which is false, mischievous, and tending to set the right arm of Britain against the left in a worse than fratricidal struggle for what is needed by both for efficiency.

[1] Throughout this volume I have spoken not of "England" but of "Britain." There is no convenient term which includes the nation as a whole. I do not altogether like the terms "Britain" and "British," because they seem to exclude one part of the race which has contributed more than its share to the victories won by the forces of the United Kingdom. Many, who are like myself Englishmen, though like many others I have both Welsh and Irish blood in my veins, use by preference the terms "England" and "English," not because we for a moment forget that part of the nation which lies beyond the Tweed, or its services in war, but because by putting a part for the whole we are able to include not this island only, but that which, however inconveniently it may occasionally display its fighting proclivities, has furnished to the ranks many of our best soldiers, and to the Army not a few of our dearest friends. I everywhere, whatever terms I use, intend to include all the race.

CHAPTER VII

THE FORCE WE HAVE

DURING the year 1887, when I for one and many other soldiers were anxiously endeavouring to ascertain whether in the judgment of our best sailors we still held our old supremacy at sea, there happily was at the Admiralty a young captain who, having seen fighting, had had his mind directed to the question of our preparedness for war.[1] As an executive officer he had assumed that everything was ready. At the Admiralty he found nothing ready. The state of things was such that to men in high office when the truth was laid before them it appeared incredible. The reason was simple. The nation had not been taken into confidence, and without the motive force of strong popular feeling no party dared to ask for what was necessary. Lord Charles Beresford's resignation and Lord Wolseley's speaking out together led first to the creation of a Naval Intelligence Department, modelled on that which already existed for the Army, and to an increase to our fleet

[1] See in the *Times* of 28th January 1888 the unanswered and unanswerable statement of the facts in Lord Charles Beresford's address to his constituents.

based on what to any thoughtful mind must appear, as it did to Sir Geoffrey Hornby, the utterly irrelevant principle that our fleet was to be strong enough to meet any other two navies. That that standard is an absurd one appears from this, that every strut and beam that is used in building requires to be strong enough to support the weight it has to carry, and that in relation to all other forms of strength the same principle applies. Our Navy requires to be strong enough to do the work it ought to do, and the comparison with other Powers cannot be instituted because their navies have no work to do proportioned to ours in any degree. The crowd of ships on the sea is a British crowd, not a French or a German crowd. Nevertheless at this moment, as far as I am able to ascertain, the number of new ships that we have is so great as compared with those of other Powers, that that fact alone gives us an advantage which, as long as it lasts, satisfies those who know as to the practical supremacy of our Navy, not because it is ship for ship and gun for gun equal to any other two navies, but because on the whole it is so strong and in such good condition that it would be tolerably well able to fulfil the duties which are laid upon it. Obviously this is not a question for statistics, as to which figures have been given over and over again and as invariably disputed. Lord Brassey's *Annual* gives the figures with much completeness, and it would be easy but useless to copy them. They would be simply bewildering and misleading. What, however, must be remembered is that in these matters we can never "rest and be thankful." It was not our statesmen who obtained for us a supreme Navy. They never can do so. It was

the aroused attention and interest of the nation. If that is not kept up, every year will see a falling back by the mere efflux of time in the efficiency of ships which gradually become antiquated. Every year also will see in other countries, as has already happened in France and Germany, a strenuous effort to put their fleets on an equality, or more nearly on an equality, with ours. It depends on those to whom this series is addressed whether that shall be met by us and our supremacy kept up. That is the first and vital matter.

As regards the Army and the other land forces, it is easier to give exact figures which represent something intelligible. We have—

At home and in the Colonies, of all ranks of Regulars	149,653
Army Reserve of two classes	80,080
On the Indian establishment	73,217
Militia in England	133,502
,, Channel Isles	3,996
,, Malta and Bermuda	2,490
Yeomanry (with staff)	11,891
Volunteers ,,	263,968
Total	718,797

The militia includes about 30,000 men of the "militia reserve" who are liable to join the Army in case of war. Actually at home we have 117,152 men of the regular army, 80,080 of reserve, and 30,000 militia reserve—197,232 men in all available for service in all parts of the world. If, therefore, two corps about 70,000 men were sent abroad, we should have 127,232 regulars besides the militia and volunteers left at home, both for home defence and for filling up casualties in the field.

The men of the two corps would be all men in the very prime of their age, between twenty-three and thirty. Of those remaining, at least another corps would be of about the same age. Most of the men coming back from the reserve have had three times as long military service as any French or Germans. Two army corps, complete in all their parts, with a cavalry division, would be ready for shipment quicker than transports could be ready for them. So far, therefore, as organisation goes for this strength we have perhaps had enough of abuse of army methods. If the points I have made be sound, this is the kind of force that we do require. Whether it is enough is a question of the nature of the work it may be called on to do. That is a political question. That with an exceedingly small increase in the army estimates relatively this is an incomparably larger and better force than we have ever had before, and more ready for immediate war, there can, I believe, be no question whatever. It would be madness, under the suggestion of those who have not studied the organisation and make reckless misstatements about it, to go back, not forwards. That we still need much I have all along maintained, but it is necessary to show that the country does get its money's worth for its money, in order to remove distrust which prevents what we need from being granted us. For the reasons I have explained, we need still a small increase to the number of our battalions even after the improvements of this year, not in order merely to add to the numerical strength of the Army, but in order to avoid breaking up its efficiency based on the system of home and foreign battalions. At present we are always in danger of doing this when-

ever a few extra battalions are sent abroad. We need therefore, for the sake of general efficiency, the nest-egg of which I have spoken. Our direst need is, however, of Artillery, proportioned to the available forces of other kinds. Hitherto what has been most essential as regards the Artillery was an increase of men and officers available to man the defensive works of our harbours and coaling-stations. It was obviously useless to fortify these places on broad imperial principles without providing men to man the guns by which they are protected. So far as the armament is complete, and it is now in most places approaching that condition, these have been fairly provided for for the first time this year. But as regards the field artillery, we are still in a peculiar difficulty. The system of relief which is, if the infantry battalions at home are equal in number to those abroad, and the cadres of a definite strength, adequate to maintain efficiency has a special effect in regard to field artillery. A battery is not, like an infantry battalion, practically homogeneous. It consists of two different parts, the drivers who ride the horses and carry the guns where they are required to be placed for firing on the enemy, and the gunners who move about the gun after it has been left on the ground ready for action by the horse teams. Among the gunners there are practically specialists, men who are trained as "gun-layers." Now if a "draft" has to be sent out to India under the restrictions now necessary as to age, length of service still remaining to complete the (seven or eight) years of colour-service, etc., it frequently, as far as the gunners are concerned, becomes necessary to include "gun-layers" in the draft. When these men arrive in India they are

relegated to the duty of ordinary gunners, because the battery to which they go has already its trained gun-layers. The battery at home is thus injured in its efficiency quite out of proportion to the gain to the battery in India. Again, the drivers cannot be all taught together like a set of independent recruits. The first time a man is put into a team it is much better to let him drive the centre horses between two more experienced drivers managing the lead and wheel horses of the gun. Again, a battalion going to the autumn manœuvres can adjust to a considerable extent the work of its recruits by not having their knapsacks or valises filled. Even if some recruits who ought not to be exposed to the strain of manœuvre work are left behind, the strength of the battalion is only reduced by the number so left, and the recruits can continue their training in the barrack square. But the work of a driver taking the horses with the guns behind them over any rough ground that he may come across at manœuvre is so dangerous for an inexperienced man that practically only fairly-trained drivers can be put into the teams; thus the very men who most require to be taught driving are necessarily left behind during such times. They cannot, like the infantry recruit, be taught just what they ought to learn, but must be employed on mere stable duties. I only give these details in order to show that it is not possible without special adaptations to its own service to apply to the Artillery the system which, when fairly worked, has done so much for us in regard to the Infantry. There is always great danger of our merely showing an increased number of guns without corresponding efficiency.

War is a grim thing, and I must put it to you bluntly, that for the safety of your homes, and for the protection of your great interests and the fulfilment of your duties throughout the world, the important matter for you is, not how many guns can move in a review, but how many shells those guns can place at the right spot at the right time; in other words, effectively among those who come to assail your homes or your other interests. Now it is these difficulties of arranging for an economical method by which guns can be provided with the trained men who shall from them so deliver these shells, that have hitherto prevented our having that complement of guns which is the chief thing now required to make both your home defences and your army for the field complete as far as its personnel is concerned. It is here, therefore, as always, a question of money. We still also require the most expensive thing in Britain next to men, ground—ground that shall enable us properly to manœuvre and to train, and ground that shall make us an effective army organically kept together in the parts and in the functions that will be required for war.

I close my little volume amid the storms of war, sounding or threatening in many quarters. I doubt if there was ever a time when we were at peace when there was such peremptory need for our being ready for war, unless we are to abandon the position which has been handed down to us by our fathers. What I am quite sure of is, that we shall not be ready for war unless you interest yourselves in the matter, unless, furthermore, you will fairly study the case as I have laid it before you, and judge whether or no you have been fairly

served by those who have been working under many difficulties to place your Army on an effective footing. Just now the Army is much out of favour, but, as I have shown you, if it be so, it is largely because we ourselves, from love of Britain and from that alone, put ourselves in the second place when you in your forgetfulness were disposed to accord us the first. We cannot yield to any sailor in the land in claiming Nelson as a representative British hero, or in loving him whatever his faults may have been. We do not believe that you will long forget the names of Wellington and Marlborough, of Gordon, Havelock, Outram, the Napiers, Clive, and Henry Lawrence. Time would fail me to touch your memories further, and I note them at hazard, but I think there is loss, not gain, to our sailors if they cannot claim their birthright in these men as we claim ours in Nelson, St. Vincent, Monk, and the rest. Since your mood changed from about the date of '88, you have not been badly served by army officers in Egypt, the Niger, West and Central Africa, and in India, and perhaps you have had sometimes reason to regret that you had not them in command when danger loomed. When they are responsible they are more easily kept in the leash, as well as more effective when let slip. In any case, just as it depends on you whether what is needed shall be done for your protection, so it depends on you whether those who write to tickle your palate shall think they do the Navy service by crabbing the Army, or whether both the right arm and the left arm of Britain shall be encouraged to work together under wise direction in hearty copartnership for the glory of Britain and the fulfilment of national duty.

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